

# EXPLAINING INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

## NATO and the United Nations: Debates and Trends in Institutional Coordination

by Kent J. Kille, College of Wooster, and Ryan C. Hendrickson, Eastern Illinois University<sup>1</sup>

*In the post-Cold War era, both the UN and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have evolved considerably to undertake a variety of new missions. In the process, the organizations have played operational roles in addressing the same conflict areas, which has led to heightened institutional and political interaction and raised questions regarding their levels of coordination or competition. Analysts have debated both the merits of developing cross-organizational coordination and what form of cooperation could be employed but have mainly focused on developments in the field instead of providing a detailed examination of institutional connections. After a careful review of existing UN-NATO studies that establishes the underlying debates in this work, this study seeks to bolster understanding of cross-institutional connections by tracing key developments in NATO's engagement with the UN. Analysis of these developments is applied to the existing debates over UN-NATO coordination and insights for the future relationship between these two organizations are considered.*

### Introduction

Since the Soviet Union's collapse, the UN and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have experienced profound change. During the Cold War, NATO viewed its core security objective quite narrowly, focusing primarily on defending Europe against potential attack from the Soviet Union (SU). At the UN, the Cold War tensions between the U.S. and the SU carried over, often undermining the UN Security Council's effectiveness and precluding the use of NATO to coordinate with UN peace efforts. Therefore, the UN and NATO rarely interacted in substantive ways during the Cold War and in general protected their institutional independence.

Although the organizations continue to have different political agendas today, efforts by the UN and NATO to maintain international peace and security have become increasingly intertwined. This interaction became evident first during the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the early 1990s, and later was tested in Kosovo in 1999 when NATO used force without UN Security Council approval. More recently, NATO has taken on a wide range of missions in conjunction with UN backing, including operations in Afghanistan, humanitarian relief support following the

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2005 Pakistan earthquake, training assistance in Iraq, anti-piracy policing efforts off the coast of Somalia, and efforts to support African Union peacekeepers in Sudan. With these missions the political and security linkages between the UN and NATO have become progressively more evident, and seem likely to increase in the short- and long-term future.

Much existing literature on UN–NATO relations focuses primarily on organizational coordination and conflict based out of shared engagement in operational missions. What is missing from this research is a close analysis of the growth in interaction across a number of other inter-institutional forums, which includes the intensified coordination between the Secretaries-General, the UN’s growing interest in building cooperation with regional organizations and NATO’s engagement in return, and the agreements and institutional offices created to foster cooperation and discourage rivalry. This study assesses the broader range of inter-institutional dialogue between the UN and NATO and, in doing so, provides a more comprehensive portrait of this organizational relationship. The findings presented here indicate the UN and NATO continue to adapt but in a manner that increasingly recognizes shared missions and purposes. These developments contrast sharply with each organization’s past institutional practices and, in a security climate that increasingly demands cooperation and military-civilian coordination on the ground, have important security and policy implications.

### **Debates over UN–NATO Coordination**

As the UN–NATO relationship has evolved in the post–Cold War era, analysts have debated over the value and merit of institutional coordination between the two organizations and have reached a range of conclusions. A key question within this literature is whether or not development of greater coordination between the UN and NATO is a good idea, including debate over whether such cooperation is in the common interest for both organizations and if operational effectiveness in addressing conflicts will improve through coordination. Different perspectives are also expressed over what form of coordination should be employed. This includes contrasting formal institutionalization of the coordination between the two organizations, with engagement on a more ad hoc and flexible basis and debate over whether NATO should serve as a subcontracting agent of the UN or serve as a more equal partner, which is often linked to considering the degree to which legitimacy of NATO actions rests on UN mandates.

Illustrative of the disagreement over organizational interests are the opposing arguments presented by Peter Viggo Jakobsen and David Lightburn (2005) in their debate “Should NATO Support UN Peacekeeping Operations?” Jakobsen argues that with increased NATO engagement on a global level “it is both natural and necessary to strengthen existing NATO–UN cooperation in this area . . . it is in NATO’s self-interest to step up its support for peace operations that are either run by the United Nations or mandated by the world body.” Lightburn rebuts that NATO should not be drawn into a conflict unless it “directly threatens the strategic or security interests of NATO members” or is connected to international terrorism concerns. Other analysts side with Jakobsen, arguing greater cross-organizational collaboration meets organizational interests. For instance, Derek Boothby (1999) emphasizes the “mutual benefit” that can be achieved through closer UN–NATO cooperation based on recognizing and benefitting from each organization’s comparative advantage. Similarly, David Yost (2007) points to the “mutual needs” of each or-

ganization, with NATO in need of overarching leadership coordination plus the international legal legitimizing basis for operations the UN can provide and, in reverse, the UN is in need of the resources and personnel capabilities NATO possesses. Lawrence Kaplan (2010) views the two organizations as having developed a “symbiotic relationship,” while Michael Harsch and Johannes Varwick’s (2009b) analysis across the rationales for, as well as possible hindrances to, UN–NATO cooperation leads them to conclude that “in order to accomplish their goals and to achieve sustainable success, they need each other” (29).

Closer institutional coordination is also viewed as promoting more effective and efficient operations. As Joachim Koops (2008) plainly states, “A lack of coordination and collaboration often leads to inefficient and counter-productive outcomes” (20). The need for coordination in the case of NATO and the UN is portrayed as particularly pressing, since these two organizations are the most capable security providers, which points to the need for better sharing of intelligence and closer staff connections across the organizations (Durch 2006). In the end, with complex security challenges in the international arena, “As two of the world’s most important security providers, NATO and the UN could benefit greatly from a more structured relationship” (von Scherr-Thoss 2006: 33).

However, other analysts stress competing interests that could make UN–NATO coordination unappealing or unnecessary. Seyom Brown (2006) argues an emphasis on coordination represents a “multilateral drag” and limits U.S. flexibility to address conflicts as needed, so the U.S. should focus on minimizing institutionalization and any related ceding of its authority. Questions have also been raised as to whether coordination will lead to greater operational effectiveness. For instance, Gary Wilson’s (2003) study argues UN engagement with regional organizations is not any more effective than groups of states with common interests coming together as “coalitions of the willing” to address particular conflicts.<sup>2</sup>

Critics from both sides have called into question whether the two organizations can really support each other in a helpful manner. On one side are concerns NATO engagement with the UN will extend the organization’s security focus in unnecessary directions and coordination in joint missions will actually undermine NATO efficiency and capability. For example, Jack Granatstein (2001) is disparaging of the UN, which he refers to as “a weak reed” (35) that continually demonstrates its inability to provide needed security compared to the more capable NATO. While Granatstein makes claims it is “clear that NATO alone could have acted to counter the Serbian ethnic cleansing actions against Kosovo” (36), Raju Thomas (1999) views such comments as indicative that NATO’s engagement in Kosovo does not support its value as a potential partner for the UN but as an organization whose actions undermine the UN.<sup>3</sup> From a UN viewpoint, issues are raised regarding the advisability of closely coordinating with NATO. This includes unease over NATO’s connection to U.S. military actions, arguments that NATO’s defensive regional alliance stance does not mesh well with the UN’s global security mandates, and apprehension that working closely with NATO has the potential to undermine UN decision-making capabilities and independence.

2. Counter-arguments certainly exist that, in relation to Kosovo, the “NATO framework provided Operational Allied Force with a degree of international legitimacy that a coalition of the willing could not have matched” (Coleman 2007: 238).

3. Thomas cites a range of Indian, Russian, and Chinese positions to support his argument. For more on China see Michael Davis (2004), and for more on Russia see Emily Metzgar and Andrei Zagorski (2003).

Concerns are reflected in the positions of members of each organization, as well as those working for the organizations. Indeed, Alan Henrikson (1995) describes the relationship between the two organizations as “allergic,” explaining: “I use this unusual word . . . because it suggests exactly that odd reaction, a disagreeable sensitivity to or even antipathy toward another, different kind of body” (95). Although these views may be linked to a lack of understanding regarding how each others’ organizations function and could positively contribute in a mutually advantageous manner, these worries raise clear impediments to coordination between the UN and NATO.

The debate also carries beyond *whether* cooperation is desirable to address *what form* of cooperation should be employed if this is to occur. One dimension of this debate is whether UN–NATO coordination should be more formally institutionalized or whether the connection between the two organizations should remain on a more ad hoc, flexible basis as certain situations arise. For example, Edwin Smith (1996) concludes the costs and risks involved in coordinated military action will outweigh the benefits and rewards, so ad hoc coalitions of actors remains the likely future path. While Yost (2007) acknowledges arguments for avoiding institutionalizing a UN–NATO relationship and continuing to engage in an ad hoc manner, or at least limiting the scope of any agreements between the two organizations to very specific areas, he counters: “An ad hoc piecemeal approach involving only particular UN and NATO agencies and departments would not furnish the political foundation necessary for a fully effective inter-institutional relationship” (61). Yost also provides a series of concrete ideas to move beyond an ad hoc approach. These range from providing NATO representation at the UN or expanding joint exercise activities to “bolder ideas” such as creating interconnected NATO–UN–EU staff meetings to an “even more ambitious” notion of creating a Crisis Response Committee comprised of a permanent assembly of related governmental and nongovernmental international organizations.

NATO’s status in relation to the UN also plays a key role in the debate over institutional coordination. As Martin Smith (1995) succinctly summarizes, “Politically most of the disagreements have arisen over the question of whether the UN Security Council (and the Secretary-General) should view NATO as being its subcontractor, or whether the Western alliance should play a more proactive and autonomous role itself” (71). The two competing models have been a focus in Dick Leurdijk’s (2003, 2004, 2005, 2008) work on the UN and NATO, which he captures as the “sub-contracting model” versus the “autonomy model.” He argues these considerations have important implications for setting the boundaries of the organizational working relationship. Janka Oertel (2008) frames the relationship models as stand-by (such as in Yugoslavia) and stand-alone (such as in Afghanistan), along with UN–NATO cooperation in relation to relief efforts (Pakistan) and training and assistance (Iraq and Sudan).<sup>4</sup> Returning to concerns over the capability of the UN, Gordon Wilson (1995) emphasizes the need for NATO autonomy where the UN must “treat NATO as a fully operational partner, rather than as a subservient element in its own organization” (91) due to his perceived problems with UN structure and authority.

The issue of legitimacy is often raised in relation to UN–NATO relations.<sup>5</sup> This is hardly a new dimension, as the notion of the UN providing “moral sanction” to military action has been

4. Oertel draws the “stand-by” and “stand-alone” models of collaboration from the work of Matthias Dembinski and Christian Förster (2007).

5. For a good discussion of UN-regional organization relationships and the implications for legitimacy, see Brian Job (2004).

in place since the Korean War (Wilcox 1963: 697), and the development of UN peacekeeping in the Suez and the Congo make it “widely accepted that only the global UN could confer the necessary degree of political legitimacy on a multilateral peacekeeping operation” (Smith 1995: 68). In recent developments, some have argued NATO involvement in military action to address conflicts outside of its immediate jurisdiction relies closely on UN approval. For example, William Durch (2006) states UN mandates provide NATO with “maximum potential political legitimacy” when undertaking military operations beyond the European context (48). Returning to the Jakobsen and Lightburn (2005) debate, Jakobsen argues, “The practical/operational case for enhancing NATO support to UN peacekeeping is, in short, convincing. If we add the question of NATO’s legitimacy, it becomes compelling.” However, Lightburn dismisses this by stating “NATO’s legitimacy is not in question today.”

How the issue of legitimacy is viewed relates closely to the possible relative roles of the organizations. As long as NATO is perceived to need UN-supported mandates for its actions then this will likely continue to impart a particular hierarchy in the relationship, which is why some analysts are resistant to this approach. This may be seen in statements such as: “In seeking to cooperate with NATO, the U.N. has expected to maintain control over the final political choices involved in peace operations. . . . Far from being a subordinate technical entity, NATO is an equally capable political player with essential technical capabilities. Instead of following the U.N.’s lead in peace operations, NATO may have the ability to set the pace whenever it chooses to do so” (Smith 1996: 556). Alternatively, it can be argued that NATO could prefer to continue to emphasize the UN’s legitimizing function and play its relative roles *vis-à-vis* the UN accordingly. As framed by Yost (2007), “NATO does not want to be seen as the demander,” instead preferring to receive UN mandates and requests for action (44).

The extension of organizational ties between the UN and NATO also raises questions regarding similarities and differences in organizational structure and culture that might affect the ability of the two organizations’ efforts to mesh well together. Mats Berdal (2001) argues that difficulties with the response to Yugoslavia emerged more from differences of opinion between member states within the organizations “than the clash of organizational cultures” and concludes UN–NATO difficulties in the 1990s “reflects more than just bureaucratic tensions between two very different organizations” (61, 69). However, other studies have emphasized the impact of organizational culture and form (Mendelson 2005; Axelrod and Borzutzky 2006; Schimmelfennig 2007). As an illustration, Donna Winslow and Peer Everts’ (2001) examination of “cultural interoperability” points to a range of organizational factors that, they believe, promotes NATO’s greater operational capability in addressing conflict compared to the difficulties faced by the UN. Yet, even with studies considering such institutional dimensions, the debates over UN–NATO coordination have largely evolved from their joint field engagements and have not reflected as closely on institutional connections and the implications these have for the functioning of the organizations in the global arena.

## **Trends in UN–NATO Institutional Coordination**

### *The Cold War Era*

The starting point for considering UN–NATO institutional coordination is the founding doc-

uments of each organization. These are indicative of the organizational relationship at the time of writing, and they contain lasting implications that carry over to the current day. In replacing the failed League of Nations, the UN was designed as a renewed organizational effort to promote universal solutions. As such, the UN Charter emphasizes the decision-making authority of the UN, as seen in the Article 24 insistence that the Security Council has “primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.” However, regional organization efforts to promote peace and security are allowed in the charter, as covered in Articles 52, 53, and 54, which make up Chapter VIII: Regional Arrangements.<sup>6</sup>

The preceding Article 51 is also important since it establishes, “Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense,” which can be viewed as allowing for regional military alliances such as NATO. At the UN Charter’s creation in 1945, a number of states, especially in Latin America, argued on behalf of regional organizations to ensure upon attack the regional organization would respond with force under Article 51 without formal Security Council approval. This principle was reiterated when a Canadian proposal was defeated, which would have required Security Council authorization for states and regional organizations before force could be used in response to an attack. In this regard, regional organizations were clearly permitted to operate, under certain circumstances, outside of the Security Council’s oversight (Meyer 1993).

Article 51 is explicitly referenced in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which was signed in 1949 and stressed the ability of NATO to use armed force if necessary “to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area” as an exercise of Article 51 rights. At the same time, returning to Chapter VIII, Article 53 of the UN Charter states: “No enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangements or by regional agencies without the authorization of the Security Council.” Article 54 also calls upon regional organizations to keep the Security Council apprised of all its deliberations. This ambiguity in the charter over regional organizations provided the founding fathers of the North Atlantic Treaty the necessary legal leeway to create NATO.

Although American participation in NATO was widely popular in the U.S. at its founding, some critics raised concerns over the legal tension that was obvious between NATO’s Article 5 and the restrictions placed on regional organizations in the UN Charter. Senator Arthur Vandenberg, who led the work in the U.S. Senate to gain approval for American membership in NATO, made extensive efforts to alleviate these concerns, and argued the missions of each organization were closely compatible. According to leading American voices in 1948 and 1949, including Vandenberg, NATO would have a close association with the UN but would operate outside of the Security Council’s veto when necessary. Even if Vandenberg was off-base in making the case for the close compatibility of each organization, the widely voiced recognition of this inherent tension between the UN Charter and the North Atlantic Treaty helped steer the passage of American membership into the alliance but still clearly left considerable legal ambiguity and unresolved questions over when and how NATO could operate outside of the UN (Kaplan 1984).

The fact that NATO founders avoided direct reference to the UN Charter in a manner that would classify NATO as a regional organization under UN guidance is of particular signifi-

6. For a review of the development of regionalism in the UN Charter, see Kennedy Graham and Tânia Felício (2006: 53–61); also see Tânia Felício (2009: 13–14) for a useful list of additional readings on this subject.

cance. Indeed, Kaplan (2010) bluntly concludes, “For the NATO allies, compatibility with the charter had always been a minor consideration in the framing of the treaty” (26).<sup>7</sup> Therefore, how the legal relation of these two documents is interpreted has important implications for the current functioning of NATO relative to the UN. As argued by Bruno Simma (1999), “If we agree that the NATO Treaty does have a hard legal core which even the most dynamic and innovative (re-) interpretation cannot erode, it is NATO’s subordination to the principles of the UN Charter” (22). While such legal views are not readily accepted by all analysts, the relative interpretation of the guidance of the founding documents resonates closely in the ongoing debate about the roles to be played by the two organizations in promoting security.

During the Cold War, the questions raised when comparing the founding documents regarding UN–NATO institutional coordination were rarely addressed. After all, during the Cold War great power clash NATO was designed to protect the security interests of the U.S. and its allies against the Soviet Union, which itself was invested in regional security through the Warsaw Pact. The two bitter foes were not going to call on their respective security mechanisms to coordinate with UN peace efforts. In fact, in one of the few UN–NATO studies carried out during the Cold War, Francis Wilcox (1963) notes the reaction of a colleague to his intention to carry out such research: “What do you propose to say? . . . Actually the two things are quite separate and distinct. There really is no relationship between them at all” (683). Wilcox acknowledged the response of his colleague was correct in terms of direct engagement between the organizations, yet such a study provided a better understanding of the possibility of an organizational relationship evolving and of evaluating the relative place of the two organizations in the international system.

Wilcox’s point has been taken up in more recent scholarship, which emphasizes the importance of understanding the Cold War years as a basis of comparison to the post–Cold War years and how organizational connections were considered. As Martin Smith (1995) notes, “The legacy of the Cold War years is not, therefore, irrelevant. Both NATO and the UN are today feeling the urge and the need to grope their way towards some kind of increased cooperation and engagement. An understanding of the historical legacy, and attempts to appreciate its lessons, can assist in this process” (71; see also Gardner 2001; Granatstein 2001; Kaplan 2010). Such Cold War historical considerations include the debate over how to handle conflicts involving members of NATO such as in the Congo, Cyprus, and the Suez crisis, great power clashes in areas such as Vietnam and Afghanistan, collective security efforts in relation to the Korean War, questions regarding German containment and international organization membership, and general considerations of a focus on collective defense versus possible engagement in areas beyond the immediate NATO sphere of operations.

### *Post–Cold War Institutional Developments*

While the Cold War legacy is an important dimension to consider, it is clear a definite shift in UN–NATO engagement occurred in the post–Cold War era. The UN has worked with various regional organizations in addressing breaches of the peace (Rivlin 1992; Griffin 1999; Deen-Racsmány 2000; McKenzie 2001; Diehl 2007). Analysts have traced and considered the devel-

7. Kaplan (2010) reaches this conclusion after a full chapter analysis titled “Treaty versus Charter 1949” (6–25).

oping UN approach to coordinating with such regional organizations (Hettne and Söderbaum 2006; Heldt 2008; Wallenstein and Heldt 2008). However, the level of “forceful peacekeeping” means involvement with NATO has been “markedly different in origin and character” (Forman and Grene 2004: 298).<sup>8</sup> As set out earlier, the two organizations have found themselves intertwined in a range of operational theaters, and the level of engagement brought about through shared missions has encouraged further grounding and development of institutional coordination beyond the ad hoc connections that were otherwise in place based on military necessity.

The UN’s involvement with NATO should also be understood within the broader context of the increasing UN outreach to regional organizations. A key document produced shortly after the end of the Cold War was UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s 1992 *An Agenda for Peace*. Boutros-Ghali emphasized the legitimizing role played by the UN in authorizing the use of force but also pointed to the important role of regional organizations in handling security issues. The Security Council and General Assembly built upon this with their own statements and resolutions supporting engagement with regional organizations.<sup>9</sup> Pushing further into the new millennium, the findings of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change formed by Kofi Annan, and the Secretary-General’s subsequent report *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*, which ultimately informed the September 2005 World Summit Outcome, are often noted for their expressed support of regional organizations acting in conjunction with the UN.<sup>10</sup> This series of pronouncements all stressed, with some wording differences or approach suggested, greater involvement of regional organizations in addressing peace and security through cooperation with the UN. In total, these efforts are lauded as promoting coordination “in the attempt to move from an *ad hoc* relationship to an organized and systematic collaboration” between the UN and regional organizations (Felício 2009: 16).<sup>11</sup>

NATO’s public statements and strategic decisions also gradually reflected a stronger desire to coordinate with the UN through an extension of NATO’s security role in general, which then was built upon to more closely incorporate a call for closer cooperation with the UN. This shift reflected a “striking” development of “a certain eagerness” to expand its partnership responsibilities, especially with the UN (Leurdijk 2005: 30; Adler 2008). At the start of this process is NATO’s Rome Summit in 1991 that produced a new Strategic Concept, which permitted the alliance to conduct a much wider range of security missions, although only passing references are made to the UN and its charter principles. When NATO foreign ministers met in Oslo the following year, in the resulting conclusions “the most striking limitation . . . lay in the fact that it was *purposely not extended to include the UN*” (Smith 2000: 136, original emphasis). In April 1999, NATO established an updated Strategic Concept that included a focus

8. This point is also emphasized in a UN report that looks across the capabilities of a range of regional organizations for cooperation on peacekeeping missions, noting “it must be emphasized that no other regional organization has the same capacity as NATO” (UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations Lessons Learned Unit 1999: 4).

9. For example, see UN Docs. S/25184, 29 January 1993 and S/25859, 28 May 1993; A/RES/48/42, 14 March 1994 and A/RES/49/57, 17 February 1995.

10. December 2004 UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change. *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*. UN Doc A/59/565; *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*. Report of the Secretary-General, UN Doc. A/59/2005, 21 March 2005; World Summit Outcome Document adopted by UN General Assembly as Resolution 60/1, 24 October 2005.

11. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also provides an overview of UN-regional organization relations in the area of maintaining peace and security in his report to the Security Council, UN Doc. S/2008/186, 7 April 2008.



on strengthening partnerships but did not emphasize the UN. Similarly, after the 11 September 2001 attacks, despite the efforts of the UN Security Council, NATO declarations from the summits in Prague (2002) and Istanbul (2004) recognizing the global security threat did not greatly reference the UN's place in maintaining international security.

At the November 2006 Riga Summit, NATO adopted the “comprehensive approach,” which focused on developing better operational coordination and consultation with the range of civil and military actors involved the security arena (Major and Mölling 2009). This has direct implications for UN–NATO relations, as NATO emphasizes, “Close cooperation between NATO and the UN and its agencies is an important element in the development of an international ‘comprehensive approach’ to crisis management and operations.”<sup>12</sup> The Bucharest Summit in April 2008 reinforced the outcome at Riga, where the declaration stressed peace and security can only be established “by working together” as “part of a truly comprehensive approach” and pointed to the need for the international community to more closely coordinate to address modern security challenges, highlighting the existing UN–NATO cooperation in the Balkans and Afghanistan. The Strasbourg/Kehl Summit Declaration of April 2009 echoed similar themes, noting how “more than a decade of cooperation between NATO and the UN . . . has demonstrated the value of effective and efficient coordination between our two organizations.” Overall, the comprehensive approach set out and pursued by NATO has the potential to “become the centerpiece for future cooperation between NATO, the UN, the EU, and the rest of the international community” (Petersen et al. 2010: 97).

An important dimension of joint organizational engagement, which involves the UN and NATO, are the high-level meetings between the UN and regional organizations. These meetings have been convened by the UN Secretary-General, with the first meeting held in August 1994 and the seventh held in September 2006, and the intervening meetings occurring in February 1996, July 1998, February 2001, July 2003, and July 2005 respectively.<sup>13</sup> The meetings bring together high-level officials at a central, focused meeting point to discuss enhanced institutional cooperation and coordination in the area of peace and security.<sup>14</sup> The meetings have discussed a range of issues and themes, with Annan reporting that highlights include agreement on organizational partnerships being approached in a flexible and pragmatic manner, recognition of the importance of organizational impartiality when handling conflicts, modalities for cooperation of conflict prevention, guiding principles on peace-building cooperation, guidance for joint activities, and setting up working groups.<sup>15</sup> NATO is a core regional organization at these meetings, attending the first high-level meeting and all subsequent meetings as the number of regional organizations participating doubled from ten to twenty by 2005. Indeed, NATO is described as “an active participant in the high-level meetings process since its inception” (Tavares 2008: 103).

After he took over the UN Secretary-Generalship from Annan in January 2007, Ban Ki-moon emphasized his commitment to continuing the high-level meetings, which, since 2005,

12. NATO (2010): “NATO’s Relations with the United Nations” (edition online), last updated 22 September available at [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_50321.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50321.htm).

13. For summaries of the first six High-level Meetings, see Graham and Felicio (2006: 65–70); also see *United Nations Yearbook of the United Nations*, Volume 50 (1996: 43), Volume 52 (1998: 33), Volume 55 (2001: 56), Volume 56 (2002: 45), Volume 57 (2003: 58), Volume 59 (2005: 96–97) New York: United Nations.

14. The High-level Meetings were welcomed and encouraged to continue by the Security Council and General Assembly; for example see UN Docs. S/RES/1197, 19 September 1998; S/PRST/2001/5, 20 February 2001; and A/RES/57/337, 3 July 2003.

15. UN Doc. A/61/204-S/2006/590, 28 July 2006.

were now supposed to occur on an annual basis, but also cautioned: “I am reassessing the process in order to refocus the meetings so that they can add more practical value.”<sup>16</sup> This “reassessing” meant the next UN-regional organizations meeting did not occur until a two-day retreat hosted by Ban on 11–12 January 2010. The retreat provided the opportunity for confidence-building between representatives of the UN and regional organizations, but the event was intentionally kept low-key with no formal record or press statement provided afterwards.<sup>17</sup> However, along with the high-level meetings organized by the secretariat, starting in 2003, the Security Council has also held thematic meetings with regional organizations connected to peace and security, which have continued as recently as 13 January 2010 directly after the two-day retreat organized by the Secretary-General, much as the September 2006 Security Council meeting was held consecutively with the seventh high-level meeting.<sup>18</sup> NATO was represented by its Secretary-General at the January 2010 retreat, and by the Deputy Secretary-General at the Security Council meeting that followed, which demonstrated NATO’s continued commitment to the process.

#### *Joint Declaration on UN/NATO Secretariat Cooperation*

A significant development in the UN-NATO relationship is the establishment of the “Joint Declaration on UN/NATO Cooperation” on 23 September 2008, which was signed by NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and UN Secretary-General Ban in New York. The declaration is short, with a single-paragraph opening clause and five points of agreement designed to “provide a framework for expanded consultation and cooperation” between the organization’s secretariats. The agreement first reaffirms the joint commitment to maintaining international peace and security, and then points to the positive cooperative operational experiences that reinforce the importance of UN–NATO institutional coordination, which have been guided by the UN Charter as well as “internationally recognized humanitarian principles and guidelines, and consultation with national authorities.” This is followed by an expression of the need to bolster cooperation and consultation, before stressing the need for the declaration framework to be viewed as “flexible and evolving over time,” with the particular issues of protecting civilians, training and capacity-building, contingency planning and lessons learned, and coordination and supporting operations emphasized. Finally, the development of such cooperation should be addressed in a “practical fashion” that recognizes NATO and UN abilities and approaches.

The effort to establish this agreement was initiated in reaction to the positive environment for regional organization engagement being promoted from the UN in 2004–05, with the declaration opening itself noting the document was “in the spirit of the 2005 World Summit Outcome.”<sup>19</sup> Beginning with encouraging “ad hoc contacts at the staff level between NATO and the UN” (Yost 2007: 57), NATO proposed such a joint declaration by the secretaries-general of both organizations in September 2005. However, by the time Ban took over the office

16. UN Doc. A/62/1 “Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization”: 27.

17. Thus, the two-day retreat was announced by the UN secretary-general’s spokesperson at the January 7, 2010 noon briefing, but no official records were released from the event. For the record of the Security Council meeting that followed, see SC/9840, 13 January 2010. Note also that the focus on, and potential media coverage of, the retreat was distracted by the major earthquake suffered in Haiti on January 12, 2010.

18. For an overview and list of related documentation, see Security Council Report (2007): “Update Report: The UN and Regional Organisations” No. 1, November. For further such reports, as well as a “UN and Regional Organisations Historical Chronology,” see <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/>.

19. For further details of the “long road to a joint declaration,” see Harsch and Varwick (2009a: 8–10).

from Annan, the wording had not been approved so efforts needed to be reinstated under the new secretary-general. Once the declaration was finalized, the text was not widely publicized; in fact the opposite occurred. As several analysts have since noted, news of the declaration signing was intentionally kept quiet and low-key (Jakobsen 2008; Harsch and Varwick 2009a; Tavares 2010).<sup>20</sup> One of the only news releases related to the declaration came in October 2008 from Russia, with Russian officials complaining the creation of such an agreement was outside of the authority of the secretariats of the organizations, and they had not been appropriately consulted.<sup>21</sup> Despite these Russian concerns, the Collective Security Treaty Organization has since signed its own Joint Declaration on UN/CSTO Secretariat Cooperation. The declaration was signed in Moscow on March 18, 2010 by Secretary-General Ban and CSTO Secretary-General Nikolay Bordyuscha. The UN–NATO declaration is now openly referenced, including being noted on NATO’s web site description of its relations with the UN.<sup>22</sup>

In June 2008, a NATO Parliamentary Assembly sub-committee on transatlantic relations, which met with NATO Liaison Officer Colonel Eric Heeze, noted: “In his view, a formal agreement will allow for smoother, more continuous co-operation, which currently takes place on a case-by-case basis.”<sup>23</sup> From a NATO perspective, the declaration is “a major step forward” for the organizational relationship (Shea 2010: 29), and is strongly referenced in the April 2009 Strasbourg/Kehl Summit Declaration with NATO “committed to its full implementation in cooperation with the UN.” Harsch and Varwick’s (2009a) analysis concludes: “Most importantly, the document sends a clear message from the top of the organizations’ bureaucracies that cooperation and coordination are desirable and necessary” (10), although other analysts caution NATO officials may be more committed to following through with the declaration than those on the UN side (Jakobsen 2008). Overall, the full impact of this declaration remains to be seen, but it is clearly a core part of considering UN–NATO institutional collaboration moving forward.<sup>24</sup>

### *Secretary-General Cross-Office Coordination*

As demonstrated by the fact that the Joint Declaration was signed by the heads of the two organizations, and the central role of the Secretaries-General in the High-level Meetings between the UN and regional organizations, these office-holders clearly hold an important place in helping to develop institutional collaboration. However, there is limited research on the degree of cooperation and coordination that has taken place between the UN and NATO Secretaries-General.<sup>25</sup> This is particularly true of Cold War studies on these institutional leaders, although

20. The authors directly experienced the effort to keep the agreement text quiet. In the initial stages of research in late 2008 and early 2009, it required a fair degree of effort via contacting officials at the UN and NATO in order to get a formal, full copy of the Joint Declaration; and this required higher-level approval in both organizations to provide the release of the document.

21. TASS (2008) “Accords Shouldn’t Be Signed Secretly, Russia Tells UN, NATO” October 9; see also Steve Gutterman (2008): “Russia Official Blasts ‘Secretive’ UN-NATO Deal” Associated Press, October 9; which includes responses from UN spokesperson Michele Montas and NATO spokesperson James Appathurai defending the agreement.

22. NATO “NATO’s Relations with the United Nations.”

23. Mission Report of NATO Parliamentary Assembly Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations, June 9–13 2008 Visit to New York and Boston.

24. The significance of the Joint Declaration is further emphasized in the focus of an International Research Symposium, “The UN and NATO: Forward from the Joint Declaration,” organized by the NATO Defense College Research Division in partnership with the Center of International Cooperation of New York University, and supported by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Turkey to the UN, October 21, 2010 in New York, NY.

25. For a discussion of the lack of coverage of UN–NATO secretary-general cross-office coordination in UN–NATO studies, and the role of the office-holders in the area of conflict engagement, see Kent Kille and Ryan Hendrickson (2010).

this absence of scholarly attention, as holds true for the study of the NATO–UN relationship more generally, is understandable since the organizational connection was at its lowest ebb.<sup>26</sup>

For most of the Cold War, it was clear the secretaries-general viewed their organizations as possessing very different purposes. For example, Trygve Lie, the first UN secretary-general, opposed NATO's creation as he doubted NATO's claims the organization fit well with the UN Charter and saw NATO as a potential threat to the UN's universal approach to addressing breaches of the peace (Kaplan 2010). His successor, Dag Hammarskjöld, possessed a similar perspective and "argued against activities outside the UN framework, claiming that the UN was the foremost body for international peace and security and could not be bypassed" (Wallensteen and Heldt 2008: 95). On the other side, NATO Secretary-General Paul Henri Spaak, who was a very activist-oriented leader, also viewed the missions of NATO and the UN differently (Smith, 1995). In addition, Peter Carrington, who served as NATO's secretary-general from 1984 to 1988, writes nothing in his memoirs about any relationship between the UN and NATO during his tenure at NATO (Carrington, 1988). Thus, the limited existing evidence suggests very little cross-office coordination and instead indicates the secretaries-general viewed their roles as distinct and separate during the Cold War.

With the Cold War's end, the activist tendencies of UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali and NATO Secretary-General Manfred Wörner in the early 1990s, and the humanitarian crisis in Bosnia, a new process began for generating a much closer relationship between the organizations and their institutional leaders. As noted later by NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, when speaking before the UN Security Council, this period "represented the birth of UN-NATO cooperation."<sup>27</sup> Boutros-Ghali especially is credited with reaching out to NATO and other regional organizations in an effort to empower them to do more in the area of peacekeeping and crisis prevention. Although early on Wörner had concerns regarding coordination with Boutros-Ghali (Henrikson 1995), he responded positively to Boutros-Ghali's initiatives. Wörner himself had helped advance NATO's new Strategic Concept in 1991 discussed above, which allowed NATO to take on new security missions that went beyond the more restricted Article 5 collective defense responsibilities of the NATO charter (Hendrickson 2010).

Wörner and Boutros-Ghali shared the view that each organization could do more to advance and promote peace and security in the world and, thus, shared similar strategic visions for international organizations and their roles in promoting peace and security, broadly defined.<sup>28</sup> Part of this new coordination also stemmed from the "dual-key" arrangement established in 1993 for the crisis in Bosnia, which required both UN and NATO officials to agree a ground violation had occurred in Bosnia before NATO could take military action in response to the agreed-upon violation. As the crisis continued in the Balkans, the dual-key arrangement, as well as the UN's difficulties promoting peace through its UN Protection Force

26. Only one major study of NATO's Cold War secretaries-general exists, which gives no attention to the relationship with their UN counterparts (Jordan 1979). A much greater number of studies existing on the UN secretaries-general who served during the Cold War period (for example, see Gordenker 1967; Fosdick 1972; Boudreau 1991; Newman 1998), but again the focus is solely on the UN office.

27. NATO "Speech by NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the Meeting of the United Nations Security Council" 11 November, 2004.

28. For an account of how the UN–NATO relationship evolved, including the links between Boutros-Ghali and Wörner during the Bosnia crisis, see Martin Smith (2000). Smith concludes, "Between 1992 and 1998 NATO and the United Nations forged, largely in an *ad hoc* and incremental way, an operational and institutional relationship which, despite being exposed to various stresses and strains in the crucible of the Bosnian conflict, nevertheless endured" (150).

(UNPROFOR), became increasingly evident, Wörner advocated for a much stronger role for the alliance in Bosnia and criticized the UN's inability to act decisively. Willy Claes, Wörner's successor at NATO, was a public and private critic of the UN and the failings of the dual-key arrangement and, thus, implicitly a critic of Boutros-Ghali's leadership (Hendrickson 2006).

The level of cross-office coordination between UN Secretary-General Annan and NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana, improved considerably during NATO's bombing campaign against Yugoslavia and Slobodan Milosevic in 1999, even though this occurred without the UN Security Council's approval. Annan has been widely noted for his encouragement of UN coordination with regional organizations. As the Permanent Representative of Greece to the UN noted near the end of Annan's tenure, "This issue has acquired great significance on the current Secretary-General's agenda who has made great efforts in enhancing and further developing the partnership of the UN with regional and other intergovernmental organizations."<sup>29</sup> Even prior to becoming secretary-general, Annan had personally cultivated relations with Wörner while serving as the UN's assistant secretary-general for peacekeeping and had publicly written and privately lobbied for a closer UN and NATO relationship in peacekeeping. In this respect, Annan had already recognized common strategic objectives for each organization before he assumed the top leadership position at the UN (Smith 2000).

During NATO's Operation Allied Force in 1999, Annan and Solana communicated and worked together closely in the lead-up to the war, during the combat operations, and in relation to diplomatic activities aimed at ending the bombing campaign. This cooperation provided an important institutional bridge during this tenuous time in each organization's joint history (Kille and Hendrickson 2010). However, NATO Secretary-General George Robertson and Annan viewed policy toward Iraq in 2003 differently and played markedly different roles in their respective organizations. As the U.S. moved toward war, Annan refused to endorse the war efforts and continued to encourage a diplomatic resolution. In contrast, once the U.S. turned to NATO in 2003 to seek its assistance for the forthcoming war, Robertson became an aggressive supporter of U.S. policy requests from the alliance and became a key diplomat in pushing NATO to accept American demands (Hendrickson 2006).

More recently, the level of interaction and coordination between UN Secretaries-General Annan and Ban and NATO Secretary-General de Hoop Scheffer was significant and suggests a continued, measurable change from the organizational separation prevalent during the Cold War. While Annan was still UN secretary-general, de Hoop Scheffer sought to reciprocate the positive outreach Annan was providing to regional organizations. De Hoop Scheffer pledged NATO support to the UN, emphasized operational cooperation with the UN, and encouraged a more structured institutional relationship between the two organizations.<sup>30</sup> Shortly after his selection as secretary-general, Ban traveled to Brussels where, at a joint press conference with de Hoop Scheffer following their meeting, he noted, "I am very much assured and encouraged by what NATO has been contributing to peace and security

29. UN Doc. S/2006/719, 7 September 2006: 2.

30. For example, see NATO "Speech by NATO Secretary-General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the Meeting of the United Nations Security Council" 11 November 2004 and NATO "Reinventing NATO: Does the Alliance Reflect the Changing Nature of Transatlantic Security?" Keynote address at the "New Defence Agenda" Conference, Brussels, 24 May 2005.

around the world. . . . We have the same goals [and] we are committed to work very closely together in the future” (NATO Press release, 24 January 2007).

Ban continued to follow Annan’s efforts to encourage connections with regional organizations, although one study cautions he was not as “keen to tackle the sensitive issue of NATO–UN relations, giving priority to other partnerships instead” (Harsch and Varwick 2009a: 8). Yet, on a number of occasions both secretaries-general met and expressed their support for joint organizational cooperation over Afghanistan, NATO’s anti-piracy mission off the coast of Somalia, as well as Kosovo. At NATO’s April 2008 Bucharest Summit, Ban addressed alliance leaders and also met privately with Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai and de Hoop Scheffer as an indication of their shared efforts aimed at improving political conditions in Afghanistan. In the final declaration from this NATO summit, specific reference is made to Ban and the importance of the international community in addressing global challenges. At a joint press conference with Karzai and Ban, de Hoop Scheffer noted, “I think the symbolism could not be more clear. The UN and NATO, standing side-by-side with the Afghan people, represented here by their President Karzai. That is how we are building the success, together, that Afghanistan has seen these past years” (NATO Press Release, 3 April 2008). Anders Fogh Rasmussen took over as NATO secretary-general from de Hoop Scheffer in August 2009 and has continued the pattern of engagement with Ban and the UN, holding a bilateral secretary-general meeting at the UN in September 2009, jointly participating in international conferences, such as the February 2010 Munich Security Conference, and referencing UN views on security issues, such as the June 2010 Israeli ship convoy raid.

Overall, there has been a considerable and meaningful evolution in how the secretaries-general of the UN and NATO interact, from the time of the Cold War where each organizational leader saw very distinct purposes for each international organization, to the present in which the leaders increasingly share and explicitly recognize common interests. More specifically, clear evidence exists of cross-office leadership cooperation, although the level of coordination varies according to the issue under consideration. While the problems in Bosnia and later during the Bush administration’s war in Iraq in 2003 demonstrated the secretaries-general can hold very different policy perspectives on key contemporary security issues, the trend since the Soviet Union’s collapse is one of increased leadership cooperation and recognition of shared security objectives that has led to a bolstering of institutional coordination.

#### *NATO Liaison to the United Nations*

While the secretary-general cross-office coordination is a significant part of UN–NATO relations, there are useful lower-level connections between the two organizations as well. Many of these are simply “ad hoc desk-to-desk contacts” (Harsch and Varwick 2009a: 7); however, regular senior-level official exchanges, meetings, and training cooperation also occur (Jakobsen 2008). Such consultations have evolved to address a range of security-related areas, including human trafficking, mines, and terrorism (Tavares 2008).

An important dimension of such efforts to enhance cooperation between the UN and NATO is the now permanent presence of a NATO liaison officer to the UN. This position is rarely discussed in existing UN–NATO analyses and only in the most limited of references

when mentioned at all in these studies. Yet, this position, which has entailed the placement of a NATO military officer at UN headquarters in New York, has evolved considerably over time and represents a meaningful change in the structural institutional cooperation that exists between the UN and NATO.

The position of a NATO liaison officer at UN headquarters was initiated in 1993 in an effort to improve communication and coordination between the UN and NATO over the crisis in Bosnia (Schulte 1997; Borowiec 1993). NATO Assistant Secretary-General Michael Legge helped negotiate the initial agreement for this position, which focused primarily on improving military contacts between the organizations (Smith 2000). Some NATO liaisons have also been placed in UN field missions, such as the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and the UN Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), even serving on the Steering Committee on Transition of Responsibilities in the former Yugoslavia (Leurdijk 1994; Howard 2008; UN Doc. S/1996/83). NATO has also, on occasion, sent liaisons to other parts of the UN system, such as the UNHCR in Geneva (Lightburn, 2001).

The liaison officer position stationed in New York took on a rather ad hoc quality for most of the 1990s. NATO liaison officers at the UN worked on a temporary rotation basis, most often arriving from the International Military Staff in Brussels. They served for short periods, often limited to only a few weeks at the most, and then were transferred to different jobs. The liaison officer operated on a low-profile, fairly informal basis that helped to provide a regular exchange of information but was not viewed as a formally institutionalized connection between the two organizations. The position was also not consistently maintained as it is currently; with Peter Barschdorff (1998) noting that at one point NATO had withdrawn the liaison officer, “which shows that efforts to maintain close working relations of these institutions seem dependent on an ongoing crisis” (198). A UN official later argued the office “needs to be revisited.”<sup>31</sup>

In 2000, the Netherlands stationed and financed a military officer under NATO auspices at UN headquarters to serve in the liaison position, where the officer remained for approximately six months.<sup>32</sup> At the end of that time, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan sought the continuation of this office and lobbied then-NATO Secretary-General George Robertson to make this position permanent. During his leadership tenure at the UN, Annan was an advocate for heightening cooperation across international and regional organizations and, in this specific case, has been viewed as a key catalyst for encouraging the existence of a permanently stationed officer (van Langenhove and Costea 2007).<sup>33</sup>

The NATO liaison officer has carried out a number of functions but primarily is at UN headquarters to promote improved communication and coordination between the two organizations.<sup>34</sup> In carrying out these duties, the liaison officer follows all developments in the

31. From a statement by Danilo Türk, assistant secretary-general of the UN. United Nations Information Service, Vienna. “UN Official Highlights Roles of Multilateral Institutions in Addressing Conflicts at Vienna Seminar,” Press Release Note No. 89, 7 July 2000.

32. This position was held by Lieutenant Colonel Jo Elte. It has remained the practice of the home state to pay the salary of the military liaison officer to the present time as a Voluntary National Contribution position, although the newly created civilian liaison officer position is a Peacetime Establishment official organizational position in NATO, so it is funded directly by the organization.

33. Italy first volunteered to serve in this office, with Colonel Manlio Silvestri taking over the position in May 2001 and serving into June 2004. Following this time, Denmark (Colonel Tommy Paulsen, 2004–07), Belgium (Colonel Eric Heeze, August 2007–September 2009), and now the Netherlands (Colonel Paul van der Heijden, since September 2009) have all placed military officers in this position.

34. Information on the activities of the NATO liaison officer is drawn in part from author telephone interview with Eric Heeze, 15 January 2009, and author telephone interview with Manlio Silvestri, 22 June 2009.

General Assembly and the Security Council and seeks to have especially close interaction with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The liaison officer also provides information about NATO missions and can offer assistance with training and evaluation as well. Coordination between the two organizations helps to ensure both sides have a clearer view of their activities and a better sense of the organizations' relative priorities. In addition, the liaison officer meets with national military representatives, not limited to NATO allies, who are stationed at their missions in New York in another effort to advance communication between NATO and national militaries. The liaison officer can also interact with representatives from other regional organizations at the UN (Novosseloff 2004), although such connections are limited to more informal working relationships. By 2004, liaison connections had "made a major contribution to more effective interaction between the organizations" (Kriendler 2004: 63). More recently, the liaison officer has been an advocate for improved communication and educational outreach, assisting with visits from NATO Parliamentarians to the U.S.,<sup>35</sup> representing the position when participating in conferences,<sup>36</sup> and participating in NATO's annual Crisis Management Exercise.<sup>37</sup>

In May 2010, the NATO liaison arrangements at the UN were expanded with the appointment of a NATO civilian liaison to the UN, which works alongside the now re-titled NATO military liaison to the UN.<sup>38</sup> This ostensibly creates complementary civil-military NATO liaison operations and provides for enhanced inter-organizational cooperation by bolstering the NATO liaison capabilities in a manner that can take into account the comparative advantage each position brings. Establishing such an office was previously referred to as "an important initiative" that "would be a valuable complement" to the existing NATO liaison officer position (Petersen et al. 2010: 84). The creation of this position represents a significant development in UN–NATO relations as it moves beyond purely military contacts and allows for the UN to connect with wider areas of NATO engagement and policies. The position will play a role in liaising with the UN Secretariat on common operational and policy interests, maintaining broader contact with allies and partners operating in New York, and providing information regarding NATO activities.

While it is difficult to directly measure the impact of the liaison officers, having these positions in place should continue to enhance and promote UN–NATO cooperation and communication. The existence of the offices also tacitly indicates the presence of shared strategic objectives between the organizations. Overall, it is clear the NATO liaison efforts have become much more established as a core part of UN–NATO relations since the early ad hoc and intermittent approach taken with the position.

From the UN side, a range of UN representatives continue to visit NATO headquarters in Brussels, and there was a liaison officer drawn from the UN Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in place since 1999 (Jakobsen 2008; Jochems 2006; Hough 2004). This was altered after 2006, even though it was claimed, "The presence of a liaison

35. NATO Parliamentary Assembly Press Release, 18 June 2008; NATO Parliamentary Assembly Mission Report, 8 June 2010.

36. For example: NATO Defense College, "17th Partnership for Peace International Research Seminar," Stockholm, Sweden, 8–10 October 2008 and The Century Foundation, "Coping with Overstretch: Realigning Capacities to Fit Peace and Security Challenges In a Time of Political Fatigue," Princeton University, 27–28 February 2009.

37. NATO Press Release (2008) 053, 10 April 2008.

38. The NATO civilian liaison position is currently held by Eirini Lemos-Maniati.



officer in Brussels has been particularly important to following and influencing NATO and EU Military Staff (EUMS) activities and doctrines of civilian-military cooperation” (UN OCHA 2003: 45). However, the UN OCHA subsequently established a Liaison Office in Brussels in November 2007 for relations with European institutions in the area, including NATO, as well as NGOs and other parts of the UN system based there. The Liaison Office seeks to strengthen organizational partnerships and improve consultations, to monitor and influence humanitarian policy-making, and to promote the use of UN principles and standards.<sup>39</sup> In direct relation to NATO, the office “facilitates and promotes the application of UN civil-military procedures at NATO and within its parliamentary assembly” (UN OCHA 2008: 38). The liaison connection between NATO and the UN could also soon be further strengthened with the posting of a UN liaison from headquarters in New York to Brussels, which would bolster the structural relations for communication and coordination.

In the end, the degree of structural institutional cooperation represented by the liaison positions should not be exaggerated. Nonetheless, with the current situation and the continuing developments, NATO’s institutionalized presence in relation to the UN now seems to be a permanent facet of their inter-organizational relationship. In this regard, the developments represent a considerable change from the Cold War era in how each organization views each other’s roles in the world today.

## Conclusion

This analysis has moved beyond the field operations focus of most UN–NATO studies to detail the broader cross-institutional connections between the UN and NATO, which emphasize the growing degree of institutional cooperation and coordination. During the Cold War, the UN and NATO operated primarily on separate tracks, although certain Cold War era dimensions, in particular the founding documents of each organization, helped to set the scene for the post–Cold War relationship developments. However, the portrait of UN and NATO provided in this study finds these organizations increasingly share similar strategic outlooks related to developing institutional contacts and, thus, have become more connected over time. Through this broader institutional assessment, we see clear signs of common strategic interests, joint institutional recognition of the value of each organization, and common visions more in concert than before. Overall, the current level of cooperation is strikingly different when compared to the Cold War and the early 1990s.

A core debate in preceding scholarship on UN–NATO relations focused on whether or not the development of greater organizational coordination was a good idea. Yet, as this analysis demonstrates, the cooperative steps taken by institutional leadership and the development of organizational connections have largely moved the organizations beyond this debate. While some analysts and practitioners may not perceive developments in a positive light, the practical reality is the two organizations have developed a stronger basis of institutional coordination. In part, this evolution is due to the parallel conceptual and strategic shifts from both organizations that served to mutually reinforce the development of a closer organizational rela-

39. In 2010, the OCHA Brussels Liaison Office operated with only two staff members and a budget of \$497,205, which remains small relative to the OCHA African Union Liaison Office, created in September 2008, which is staffed by eight individuals and has double the budget (UN OCHA 2010).

tionship. UN efforts to reach out to regional organizations have hardly been limited to NATO, and NATO's shift to a comprehensive approach is not geared solely toward the UN at all. Nonetheless, the confluence of the two has provided a helpful context in which to develop UN–NATO relations in particular along with the opportunities to engage through high-level meetings and Security Council sessions focused on regional organizations. The secretaries-general have provided leadership from the top of the organizations, by necessity due to the related field operations but also through a range of other developing connections, that has largely encouraged greater organizational coordination instead of competition that could have developed.

The signing of the Joint Declaration on UN/NATO Cooperation by the secretaries-general provides a key signpost for deepening the connection between the two organizations. This can already be seen in the development of the NATO liaison officer positions. The Liaison Office had already evolved beyond the ad hoc early days built around the needs of particular peace-keeping operations to establish a permanent military liaison presence in New York. Building upon and in support of the Joint Declaration, as well as the emphasis on civil-military cooperation in NATO's comprehensive approach, the civilian liaison was recently established and will provide further practical and pragmatic cooperation in areas of common UN–NATO interest.

At the same time, despite such developments, increased coordination is still relatively limited in practice, and each step taken has been a cautious one—as demonstrated by the politically sensitive quiet signing of the Joint Declaration and developments in the NATO Liaison Offices. It is clear the debate over what form of institutional coordination should be employed remains highly relevant. The initial conceptualization and structural developments for even greater coordination are in place and have already moved the two organizations into a relationship that would have been hard to comprehend in the Cold War era, but there is no guarantee these trends will continue to develop further in the future. The trajectory for more formal structural connections beyond ad hoc coordination has been established, but questions remain about the degree to which the organizational structures and cultures can truly mesh, especially in the face of ongoing debates over legitimacy, the best approach to peace and security, and a subcontracting versus equal partner role for NATO.

The UN and NATO both remain engaged in complex security operations, which demand military resources as well as civilian expertise and solutions to humanitarian crises, and will continue to evolve in response to new threats and challenges. How the two organizations approach institutional coordination will continue to have important implications for global peace and security. Shifts in conceptual and strategic thinking, leadership decisions, engagement by the Secretaries-General, liaison efforts and a range of other meetings in New York and Brussels, and how the Joint Declaration is implemented will provide the basis for understanding cross-institutional coordination alongside developments in the field as the two organizations continue to wrestle with providing security to the international community.

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