

Papp Gyula
gypapp57@freemail.hu

THE MILITARY ENGAGEMENT OF MULTINATIONAL UNITS IN THE INTEREST OF THE EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENSE CAPABILITY ENHANCEMENT

Absztrakt

Európában egyre nagyobb szerepük van a többnemzetű békefenntartó kötelékeknek. Hazánk is felismerte a közös katonai képességek kialakításában rejlő lehetőségeket. Írásomban 2 többnemzetiségű alegységet mutatok be. Ezek magyar komponense az 5. Bocskai István Könnyű Lövészdandár állományába tartoznak. 2004 végéig, mint az alakulat parancsnok-helyettese felelős voltam az alegységek felkészítéséért. Cikkem első részében az MLF (Multinational Land Forces) többnemzetiségű dandárt mutatom be. Ennek gyakorlati megalakításában 1998 nyarán Olaszországban személyesen is részt vettem. Írásomban bemutatom az alakulatot, valamint az egyik könnyű lövész század felkészítését, s a végrehajtott gyakorlatának tapasztalatait.

A másik alegység, amelynek tevékenységéről írok a Magyar- Román- Szlovák- Ukrán „Tisza” műszaki zászlóalj. A cikk összegzéseként megállapítom, hogy a többnemzeti kötelékek munkájába való aktív részvétel úgy katonai, mint politikai szempontból megtérülő befektetés a Magyar Honvédségnek

There is a widening role for the multi-national peacekeeping forces in Europe. Hungary has also recognized the possibilities of forming joint military capabilities. In my article I introduce two multi-national subunits. The Hungarian part of the subunits belongs to the 5th Bocskai István Light Infantry Brigade. As the Deputy Commander of that brigade, I was responsible for the training of subunits appointed to the international tasks. In the first part of my article I show/introduce the military formation called Multinational Land Forces (MLF) the multi-national brigade. I personally took part in the foundation of that brigade in Italy in the summertime of 1998. In my article, I present the brigade and the training one of the light infantry companies as well as the experience of fulfilled exercise.

The other multi-national unit is introduced in my work is the Hungarian-Romanian-Slovakian-Ukrainian “Tisza” Engineering Battalion. In the summarizing part of my writing, I have made conclusion that participating in a multi-national force is a real turning investment for the Hungarian Army.

Kulcsszavak: *többnemzetű kötelékek, nemzetközi szerepvállalás, katasztrófa elhárítás, polgári lakosság segítése, harccsoport, nemzeti korlátozás, nemzeti támogató elem ~ multi-national forces, international undertaking, disaster prevention and disaster relief operation, national restrictions, national support element*

During the last couple of years, it happened in the meeting of the Ministers of Defense in Nice the Secretary General (SG) of NATO pointed out there were some contrasts between the countries' military offer in the case of their international peacekeeping tasks and the military capabilities after military developments.

From my point of view, the Hungarian Defense Forces (HDF) always takes its best effort in the case of bilateral and multilateral agreements in order to achieve the desired goals. Moreover, Hungary is 'on the good side' of the NATO's SG's first (above-mentioned) statement.

In addition, in this process Hungary always took initiatives and looked for the existing and future multinational military capabilities.

In this article, I would like to introduce some „good examples” from those I met during my military carrier.

1. HUNGARIAN-ITALIAN-SLOVENIAN MULTINATIONAL LAND FORCE (MLF)

Firstly, I would like to give some background information about the history of setting up, the organization and tasks of the Hungarian-Italian-Slovenian Multinational Land Force (MLF).

It is a multinational brigade size unit idea of which was brought up by Italy in 1996. The following aims were determined by the participating nations at the establishment of the unit

- Tightening the Central and Eastern European states' cooperation;
- Strengthening the security and the defensive capability of the region;
- Increasing the presence of military capabilities in different peacekeeping operations.

a. The main steps of the unit's setting up

The three participating nations – Italy, Slovenia and Hungary signed a „Letter of Intent” on 14 November 1997 in Budapest to prepare the set up of MLF. The next step happened in Udine on 18 April 1998 when the MLF came to life by the signatures of the chiefs of staffs. This time the TRILOG-98 exercise was carried out in which I worked as the deputy commander of the Multinational Brigade. The main aim of the exercise was to overview the military cooperation opportunities of the three countries in order to enhance the safety and security of Europe. The main goals were joint staff exercises and trainings.

The next step was the signing of Memorandum of Understanding by the Defense Ministers in Italy (Udine) on 21 October 1999, which is the legal basis for the Hungarian staff element creating and locating at the Julia Alpine Brigade in Udine. A draft Technical Agreement, a common act plan and a document implying the necessary organizational framework were signed as well.

b. The MLF was established for fulfilling the following principles:

It is a brigade size unit, which consists of light infantry subunits basically. Its task is participation in peace-support operations from the spectrum of humanitarian, searching and rescuing operations through peacekeeping tasks in crisis response operations up to battle operations.

The planned area of operation of the MLF includes all Europe, but focused on the Middle East and around those areas of Southeastern Europe where extreme weather and terrain conditions are typical.

The opportunity is opened for other countries to join the MLF and this unit will be employed as a typical multinational peacekeeping force. For deployment of it, authorization of UN or OSCE is inevitable but it can be used by the request of NATO as well.

c. The organization of the MLF

Command: brigade command, multinational staff which based on the Italian Julia Alpine Brigade's staff.

As the leading nation, Italy gives the commander of the task force and the 60 percent of the manpower of the staff. Hungary and Slovenia gives 20-20 percent of the staff and both of them give the Deputy Commander (DCOM) of the brigade. The Hungarian DCOM of the MLF is always the DCOM of the 5th Infantry Brigade deputy commander.

In peacetime from the side of Hungary and Slovenia, there are two officers and one NCO in service who are the permanent staff element of the MLF in Udine.

Maneuver units: It consists of an Italian regiment, a Hungarian infantry battalion and a Slovenian infantry battalion. While the Italian and Slovenian subunits are specialized in operations on the maintained terrain, the Hungarian battalion with its heavy equipment mainly plays significant role on the light terrain, used as a rapid reaction, and show the power force.

Combat support units: They are an Alpine artillery regiment, an engineer company, and if the task requires the MLF could be strengthened with an armored, recon company.

Combat service units: The main subunits contain a logistic company, a medical company, an HQ support company, a signal company, an MP company and a National Support Element. The three nations have an agreement that the combat support and service units are provided by Italy. According to the Memorandum of Understanding, the Italian side provides the following services to the Hungarian element and the others are national responsibilities:

- Class I (food): Italy provides it in return for reimbursement;
- Class II (equipment): national responsibility;
- Class III (fuel): Italy provides it in return for reimbursement;
- Class III (lubricants): national responsibility;
- Class IV (engineering): national responsibility, but in the case of urgency Italy provides it in return for reimbursement;
- Class V (ammunition, explosives): national responsibility;
- The force deployment and redeployment is national responsibility;
- The military equipment maintenance, support and service are national responsibilities.

d. Control

A Political-Military Steering Group was established in order to control the multinational land force. This group has a meeting annually, but there is a possibility for the participant nations to call it up at any time. To assist the activity of this group the three nations established a Political-Military Working Group, which is built upon the delegates of the nations' MoD, General Staff and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Working Group is activated on call. The MLF reached its operational readiness in 2002.

2. THE HUNGARIAN-ROMANIAN-SLOVAKIAN-UKRAINIAN „TISZA” MULTINATIONAL ENGINEER BATTALION

The Defence Ministers of the four countries (Hungarian-Romanian-Slovakian-Ukraine) signed a „Letter of Intent” to form a multinational engineer battalion in Ukraine on 15 January 1999. The purpose of it was to examine the opportunity of the establishment of a multinational engineer battalion for international peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. The main reason to form this unit is that these countries would like to send it into crisis areas in the framework of humanitarian tasks such as disaster relief and prevention operations.

Later on, the participants modified the task, according to this change the multinational battalion's activity exclusively focuses on the area of the river Tisza. Thus, the main task of the battalion is participation in disaster relief and prevention operations in the vicinity of the river Tisza.

a. Main events of the unit's set up:

- 15 January 1999 Uzhgorod
Hungarian, Ukrainian, Romanian Defense Ministers' letter of intent to establish a multinational battalion to assist disaster relief and prevention operations along the river Tisza.
- 18-20 May 1999 Bucharest
General Staff's level meeting in order to timing the related tasks.
- September 1999 Göd
Preparation of the draft memorandum of understanding and Slovakia declared its intention to join the formation.
- 26 May 2000
Four parties' MoD's meeting.
- 18 January 2002 Budapest
The four nations' Defense Ministers signed an Intergovernmental Agreement.
- 15 November 2002 Budapest
The four nations' chiefs of staffs signed a Technical Agreement and it became operative in the next year
- 13-17 May 2002
The first command and staff exercise in Vinogradovo.
- 22 November 2002 Nyíregyháza and Tímár
Evaluation of the operational readiness of the Hungarian element of the battalion.
- 31 December 2002
The battalion reached its full operational readiness.

b. The battle order and the manpower of the TISZA battalion

The battalion based on a multinational command and national elements. The nations elements' manpower based on the equality and follows their own national laws and rules. A national contingent's staff of the battalion may not be more than 200 persons, but may not be less than 100 persons. The national contingents follow their national organizational structure and they are stationed at their own state's area. They execute their tasks with their own equipment.

c. Command and control

The national contingent commander, the chief of staff, and the senior officers are appointed by the sending nation. The subordination of the national contingents belongs to their own country as well. The battalion commander is appointed from that nation in which country the battalion operates.

The contingent commanders of the rest of the contributing nations will act as a deputy commander. The battalion has a liaison team from each country.

d. Training

The battalion holds exercises on the area of one of the parties annually by a rotational basis. The parties plan, organize and carry out their national contingents' training independently.

e. Financing and logistic support of the battalion

During engagement of the battalion in a disaster relief or prevention operation the nations have no charge. The parties ensure their own financial and logistic needs.

In the case of a common operation the logistic resources are given by the host nation. The deployment and redeployment into the area of operation is national responsibility. Covering the first three days' resources (financing, food, fuel, etc.) during an operation is national responsibility. The Technical Agreement determines the necessary equipment and means.

The emergency medical treatment is the task of the host nation. The parties' task is the facilitation of the border crossing procedures.

f. Participation in disaster prevention and disaster relief operation

If a contributing nation issues a request for the battalion, activation through the way of diplomacy the participation is carried out through the requested collaboration by the authorities' approval.

After, the battalion commander takes command the multinational battalion begins the deployment into the area of operation according to the request of the host nation.

The Hungarian part of the battalion which is a reinforced engineer company with the necessary manpower and equipment is appointed from the 5th Infantry Brigade.

After the operational readiness, the battalion is going to be an efficient and effective unit, which will be a considerable mean in the hand of the contributing nations' governments during a disaster relief operation.

I would like to emphasize, that the multinational units are not new units. They are already existed and organized for other tasks in their own countries. The given situation determines and decides the priority of the units' employment.

3.RESULTS OF THE PREPARATION AND TRAINING OF THE MLF'S HUNGARIAN COMPANY

In the second part of my writing, I would like to give information about the results of the preparation and training of the MLF's Hungarian company

The experience of the nearly half decade long common work was the basis for the Hungarian MLF unit that started its first real mission in NATO (KFOR) operation in November 2005. The decision that a company from the Hungarian MLF battalion took part in this operation was made in 2004. This was in harmony with endeavor that Hungary wanted to increase its presence on the Balkan.

The unit executed its tasks under the command of the KFOR's South-West Brigade Task Force Aquila. In the framework of this – to ensure the freedom of movement, to ensure safe and secure environment for civilian population and to protect the minorities and religious places – the unit checked the designated area continuously, gave safe and secure environment to the repatriated Serb minorities, executed daily patrols and ran mobile checkpoints. Moreover, the soldiers of the company trained themselves how to run air deployed check points, how to close hot areas, and additionally they carried out searching and rescuing trainings. They gained experience about these areas during real situations and trainings.

a. Company's mission

The company finished its duty successfully. Weapon was not used and personal injury did not happen. The company reached its goals, which were given by the superior command.

I would like to introduce some typical executed tasks:

- Daylight patrol: 227 tasks;
- Patrol during night: 170 tasks;
- On foot patrol: 93 tasks;
- Check point: 460 tasks;
- Observations: 380 tasks;
- Escort: 64 tasks.

b. Experiences of the preparation for the mission and deployment

The tasks of the company that were determined in July 2005 were changed many times during the mission by the lead nation. The information partially was known during the preparation for the mission. The tasks became identified exactly after the advance party deployment in January 2006. The organization of the company based on this team experiences. The equipment list implied the most necessary equipment and devices but some accommodation problems came up after the deployment of the company to the theater. The company needed many additional materials such as containers, office furniture, ect. The preparation period was successful and useful. The bulk of the central training (for example the communication, public health, logistics, cartography), gave a useful knowledge to the soldiers. During the common training with the joint elements, our soldiers got a lot of experience about the areas of airlift, urban war fighting and crowd riot control (CRC). This new knowledge became a very good base for the operations in Kosovo.

It is confirmed that the KFOR Directives, KFOR Instructions, KFOR Standing Operation Procedures (SOPs) and other military manuals are inevitable and vital for the preparation and

during a mission as well. These manuals and rules are influenced fundamentally the soldiers' activity and the command and control tasks of the company's commander.

These manuals and SOPs define accurately the tasks of the soldiers and determine the exact procedures in the area of operation such as how a car control check point has to run, what the main principles of an observation point set up are, what kind of personnel equipment has to be used in the area of operation. The main disturbing problem was that the company had to take over its full equipment and materials during the preparation period.

Despite of the soldiers effort, the equipment was not full neither on the time of the readiness evaluation (15 December 2005), nor the later designated day which was on the 05 of January 2006. Motor vehicles were missing, and the needed furniture was not available. Unfortunately, but fact, the majority of the problems came up because of the precipitation.

c. Experience of the operational cooperation

The HDF MLF KFOR executed its tasks under the command of the Multinational Brigade South-West Task Force (TF) Aquila North-East's Battalion combat team. The company was deployed to Pec in Vilaggio Italia camp where the Aquilla's command and staff functioned as well. The brigade HQs set up in Prizrenben and our own battalion functioned in Gorazdevac. On 15 May 2006 the brigade was reorganized and in the northern part of Kosovo Task Force West (TFW) was formed under the command of Italy.

TF W's staff located in camp Vilaggio Italia as well. The Aquilla's battle group's name was changed to Manouvre Group (MG) but its tasks and responsibility were not changed. The Hungarian company continued its tasks in the designated area of operation. The General Support Agreement (GSA) named the Italian National Support Element responsible for the support and service according to the Technical Agreement.

In case of the operational command, the company got the tasks directly from the North-East Battalion but sometimes those came from the MG. The GSA has provided the logistic support. One infantry platoon positioned onto Bica Grabac with weekly rotation. During the last two months, one platoon served as a rapid reaction force and positioned to Gorazdevac as well. The command, control and the cooperation was not easy because of the outgoing tasks in other areas of operations. These operations lasted from an hour to several weeks so it is demanded close operational and logistic cooperation with other nations' staff.

As we can see, the company had to operate in three or four different areas at the same time and the company had to work between difficult and different operational and logistical circumstances. Practically, the company commander had to send more liaison teams and he had to focus his work around on the main tasks of the company. Besides of that the company commander had to maintain the command lines with his Hungarian superiors as well. We can say that the company's staff contained the necessary elements. The most difficult period of the mission was, when the command and control of the company was really complicated because of the bulk of the preparation for the next tasks, the management of the ongoing tasks and the maintenance of the support and report system toward Hungary in the same time during several days. Managing the strength always required flexibility, because the lead nation did not establish computer network so the company command had to issue orders in hand-written way. In case of application of other elements such as Explosive Ordnance Disposal EOD teams, engineer units or medical units the lines of communication caused a lot of difficulties. The main problem derived from lacking the language skills and radio equipment incompatibility. On the area of CRC our known, used and trained method was almost the most effective in the mission.

I would like to emphasize, that this knowledge was recognized by the KFOR command entirely and we had to organize and run trainings for other nations' soldiers.

d. Organizational and functional experience

Important experience, that Hungary did not apply national limitations at all. The offered military unit would be used in every operation despite of that the unit had no appropriate equipment for task execution and the task requires more budget than it was planned.

The Technical Agreement as a core document influenced the function of a unit the most in multinational environment. This was the reason that it had to develop the best (ez practice in order to avoid difficulties. Unfortunately, running medical center was not a part of the technical agreement of the HDF MLF KFOR company. Because of it, this kind of cooperation has run via agreements with other contributing nations. It would be important to make agreements and control by the technical agreements the followings: detailed list of cooperation such as set up of work places, offices, water supply, norms of accommodation, number of containers, etc.

We can say that some elements of the unit exceeded the company's tasks like Human Intelligence (HUMINT). The 25 head platoons are effective but in almost every case, we had to reinforce them from the transportation section, signal section or the staff.

The daily 'framework' tasks yielded the result that it was necessary to separate the squads into three different tasks. Because of this, we had to train the soldiers to fulfill multifunctional tasks. The soldiers had to have skills in the following areas, for example: driving, communication, and medical treatment. The ordered administrations cause difficulties to the company as it necessary.

The HUMINT section as a part of the company was totally opposite of the KFOR standards and requirements because this element was organized at brigade level and we used it at the company level. In order to assure this section is working requirements we had to plan and organize a lot. The company commander's tasks were grouping amongst the infantry method. The lack of National Support Element (NSE) made his work more difficult than it was necessary. Fundamental, on the KFOR area the soldiers' supply is independent from each other. In the practical life, it was difficult to understand for example, that a Hungarian unit requests an invoice from another Hungarian one in exchange for a given service.

The role of the national support element could be determining at the purchases, at the servicing motor vehicles in order to support the operation of the unit. Development of the entering into a contract, and enforcing the technical agreement also could be run via the NSE.

The Hungarian concept - so the HDF 64th Logistic Regiment's role - did not take care this level of the support and supply in the area of operation. Although the Logistic Regiment is the base of the support and supply in Hungary, it does not have an element for operational areas abroad to do it.

Following the KFOR example we would have to consider to deploy an independent support organization which could execute this kind of tasks and could facilitate the tasks of the maneuver units' commanders and staffs.

Some words about the Military Police (MP) force. I can express the Hungarian Military Police force on the theatre of war had been justified. It is really important, because disciplining drivers, carrying out road checks, inspecting car accidents are MP tasks at the KFOR and national responsibility as well. So we can say that the lack of own MP elements is a disadvantage. We can request an MP unit in every case from the KFOR headquarters.

Application of the own NSE and MP units in the area of operations could facilitate our maneuver units' commanders' tasks. They had to deal command and control only the units' peacekeeping operations and tasks.

e. Experience of the rotation and redeployment of the company

Beside the main task of the company, an inventory was ordered to make it in July. It gave a very good base for the handover of responsibility of the mission. The main problem was that parallel with it the company had to continue its peacekeeping tasks. During the inventory, two platoons of the company and a small staff carried out tasks in the French sector meanwhile the daily tasks were intensified as well because of the Italian subunits' hand-over. The proper execution of the inventory divided the strength of the company.

The timing of the handover of responsibility of the mission was acceptable and could support the continuous task share and at least the 50 percent's combat readiness. The company was able to work during the period of the hand-over with three platoons, although the last platoon which was deployed to Kosovo was not able to operate through two or three days because the lack of weapons, ammunition and other materials. This platoon took over its materials and equipment during this period.

I would like to underline the importance of the continuous command and control handover as well. The previous and the new commander had to cooperate every time and every case during the handover. It was the most important. The new commander always got the timely and appropriate information and experience from the previous one.

In order to complete the HDF MLF KFOR company's mission the full disbanding of the unit was required on paper. This task was run according to the Hungarian superior's order saying the deadline for that on 30 October 2006.

CONCLUSIONS

The company executed the tasks of the deployment to the theater successfully. It was able to reach the operational readiness on time. The company executed its tasks on high level and the KFOR Headquarters recognized it several times. The cooperation with the Italian command was continuous. The lines of communications worked reliable to Hungary during the whole mission. The company got support from the commands and from the other contributing nations as well.

From my point of view, the activity of the Hungarian company during this mission verified that the MLF is an applicable unit for NATO and EU operations and it can guarantee the Hungarian participation for these kinds of operations. The Hungarian element of the MLF is worth improvement.

It can give a professional and rapid deployable strength to other NATO and EU ad-hoc coalition forces.

It can have an important role in regional cooperation as well. The future improvements of the MLF, the role of Hungary in it and enforcement its interests could be increased.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. László Szép–Zoltán Bárány The Hungarian-Italian-Slovenian Multinational Land Force (MLF)
2. Multinational Land Force – MLF (Udine), national military representative reports in connection with the subject to the Commander of the HDF Land Force Command (2004–2005).
3. The reports of the HDF MLF KFOR company commander
4. The agreement signed by the governmental representatives of Hungary, Italy and Slovenia in April 1998

5. The 1998. XLV. law.
6. The Technical Agreement of the MLF (21 October 1999)
7. The Memorandum of Understanding of the MLF (Egyetértési Megállapodás)
8. Agreements and minutes which were signed during the political-military decision making process (1998-2005)