Bilateral Partnership on an Even Keel

The Integration of Swedish and Dutch Forces in EU Naval Force Operation Atalanta, 2015

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Armed Forces (Försvarsmakten)

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Sammanfattning

I början av 2015 bidrog Nederländerna och Sverige med ett gemensamt bidrag till EU:s militära operation för att bekämpa pirater utanför Somalias kust – EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta. Svenska förmågedelar, som inkluderade två Stridsbåtar 90 och två helikoptrar (Helikopter 15), samt ett svensklett styrkehögkvarter var under tre månader baserade ombord det nederländska fartyget HNLMS *Johan de Witt.* Detta bilaterala bidrag var unikt, speciellt att ett styrkehögkvarter under ledning av ett land var baserat på ett flaggskepp som var under ledning av ett annat.

Generellt sett ansågs integrationen ha varit framgångsrik, i vissa avseenden förvånadsvärt god. Denna rapport beskriver och analyserar planering och implementering av sammanslagningen av nederländska och svenska styrkor, och identifierar lärdomar som kan vara av värde för liknande samarbeten i framtiden. Nationella regelverk och procedurer, ledningsstrukturer, förberedande utbildningssverksamhet, den valda integreringsnivån samt attityder och kultur är några av de frågor som berörs.

Nyckelord: Europeiska unionen, EU, GSFP, EUNAVFOR, Operation Atalanta, Nederländerna, Försvarsmakten, maritim säkerhet, fredsfrämjande insatser, Afrikas horn, Somalia, sjöröveri, EUCAP Nestor, Pooling and sharing

Summary

In 2015, the Netherlands and Sweden provided a joint contribution to the EU's counter-piracy military mission EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta. During their three-month deployment to the area of operation, Swedish troops and enablers – including two Combat Boat 90 assault craft and two AW109 helicopters – were stationed on board the Dutch warship HNLMS *Johan de Witt*, which also hosted the Force Headquarters (FHQ) led by a Swedish Admiral. This kind of cooperation, in particular having a tactical headquarters led by one nation and the flagship led by another, was quite unique.

In general, the integration was considered to have been successful – to some extent surprisingly so. This report describes and analyses the planning and execution of the fusion of Dutch and Swedish forces, identifying key lessons that may be of value in similar future collaborations. National regulations and procedures, command and control structures, preparatory training and exercises, the chosen level of integration and personal mindsets are among the issues discussed.

Keywords: European Union, EU, CSDP, EUNAVFOR, Operation Atalanta, the Netherlands, Swedish Armed Forces, maritime security, peace support operations, Horn of Africa, Somalia, piracy, Pooling och Sharing

Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACMN	Atalanta Classified Mission Network
ASIFU	All Sources Information Fusion Unit
CMF	Combined Maritime Forces
CO	Commanding Officer
CONOPS	Concept of Operations
CPCC	Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
EASA	European Aviation Safety Agency
EDA	European Defence Agency
EU	European Union
EUMS	European Union Military Staff
EUNAVFOR	EU Naval Force
EUTM	EU training mission
FHQ	Force Headquarters
FOB	Forward Operating Base
FRAGO	Fragmentary order
FRISC	Fast Raiding Interception and Special Forces Craft
HNLMS	His (Her) Netherlands Majesty's Ship
HUMINT	Human intelligence
IMINT	Imagery intelligence
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ISR	Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance
IT	Information technology
JMP	Joint Mission Preparation
LCCT	Landing Craft Control Team
LCU	Landing craft utility
LMCB	Local Maritime Capacity Building
LNO	Liaison Officer
LPD	Landing Platform Dock
LTT	Lines to Take
MEDEVAC	Medical Evacuation
MINT	Maritime Intelligence Team
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MoD	Ministry of Defence
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NORDEFCO	Nordic Defence Cooperation
OHQ	Operational Headquarters
OPLAN	Operations Plan
PDT	Pre-deployment training
PfP	Partnership for Peace

PSC	Political and Security Committee (EU)
PWO	Principal Warfare Officer
Recce	Reconnaissance
ROE	Rules of Engagement
SAC	Strategic Airlift Capability
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
VPD	Vessel Protection Detachment
VTC	Video Teleconference
WFP	World Food Programme

1 Introduction

Declining defence budgets across Europe following the global economic and financial crisis mean that sharing military capabilities, or "pooling and sharing", has become an attractive option for many national defence forces as a means to cut costs while at the same time maintaining and developing crucial capabilities. Defence cooperation among European Union (EU) member states is under development, and in December 2013 the European Council mandated a series of actions to further deepen such cooperation, for example, regarding capability development and rapid response capacity.[1] The European Defence Agency (EDA) is currently running numerous different projects, four of which have been prioritized: remotely piloted aircraft systems, air-to-air refuelling, satellite communication and cyber defence.[2] Pooling and sharing is primarily linked to specific projects such as those mentioned above or to keeping certain critical capabilities permanently operational by establishing individual programmes, such as the Strategic Airlift Capability (SAC).[3] However, pooling and sharing can also take other forms. One example is the recent joint Dutch-Swedish contribution to EU Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) Operation Atalanta, the EU's military counter-piracy mission in the Gulf of Aden and the Western Indian Ocean. During their three-month deployment to the area of operation in the winter and spring of 2015, Swedish troops were stationed on board the Dutch warship HNLMS *Johan de Witt*, which also hosted the tactical-level Force Headquarters (FHQ) led by a Swedish Admiral. This kind of cooperation, in particular having a tactical headquarters led by one nation and the flagship led by another, is quite unique. The respective decisions by the Dutch and Swedish governments to join forces in Operation Atalanta have raised significant interest among EU member and other states,[4] providing plenty of reasons for identifying key lessons from the cooperation which could be of use for similar collaborative endeavours in the future.[5]

[1] European Parliament, 2015. *European defence cooperation: State of play and thoughts on an EU army*, Briefing, March, pp. 3-4.
[2] European Parliament, 2015. p. 3.
[3] European Defence Agency, 2015. *Our Work*, https://www.eda.europa.eu/our-work (accessed 8 July 2015).
[4] Interview 52.
[5] The authors would like to express their gratitude to the interviewees listed in full in the reference list. Their insights and views were invaluable to the study. The support provided by the Swedish Armed Forces in arranging interviews and ensuring access to information was also much appreciated. We would like to extend a special thank you to Anna Weibull who reviewed the report and whose constructive comments improved the text. It should be emphasised however that the conclusions of the report are solely those of the authors.

1.1 Purpose and Research Questions

This study was conducted within the framework of the Swedish Defence Research Agency's (FOI) Peace Operations Project. The Peace Operations Project carries out regular analyses and studies of international peace support operations, focused specifically on operations in which Swedish military personnel participate. These studies and analyses are commissioned by the Swedish Ministry of Defence (MoD) and feed into the MoD's decision-making processes, in support of ongoing operations or to contribute to the planning of future operations. Previous studies include analyses of Sweden's contribution to Operation Atalanta in 2013,[6] and to the EU's training missions in Mali (EUTM Mali) and Somalia (EUTM Somalia).[7] An analysis of the EU's regional capacity-building mission in maritime security, EUCAP Nestor, has also been published.[8]

The report was commissioned by the Swedish MoD to analyse Sweden's fourth contribution to Operation Atalanta, and specifically to look at the cooperation with the Netherlands. Two key stages were identified in the process of setting up the collaboration: the planning phase and the implementation phase. During the planning phase, important political decisions were made, military contributions negotiated and joint preparations conducted. During the implementation phase, lessons were learned about working together.

Hence, the main purpose of the study is to describe and analyse the planning and execution of the joint Dutch-Swedish contribution to Operation Atalanta in 2015. More specifically, the purpose is to identify key lessons and aspects connected to the integration of the two countries' enablers, personnel and systems. The experience of having a multinational and Swedish-led FHQ based on board a Dutch flagship is also analysed. The end goal is to identify the key lessons and aspects of the mission that may be of importance to similar future collaborations.

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

- What lessons of relevance to integrated bilateral operations can be learned from the planning and execution of the joint Dutch-Swedish contribution to Operation Atalanta in 2015?

[6] Tham Lindell and Weibull, "Sveriges militära bidrag till Operation Atalanta 2013. En insatsanalys av ME03", FOI, November 2013.

[7] Harriman and Skeppström, " Insatsanalys EUTM Somalia: Måluppfyllnad och resultat under 2014 för EU:s militära kapacitetsbyggnadsinsats i Somalia", FOI, December 2014; Skeppström and Hull Wiklund, "Insatsanalys EU:s kapacitetsbyggnadsinsats (EUTM) i Mali", memo, FOI, December 2013; Nilsson and Norberg, " European Union Training Mission Somalia – En insatsanalys", FOI, December 2012.

[8] Tejpar and Zetterlund, "EUCAP Nestor – Trying to Steer Out of the Doldrums", FOI, October 2013.

- What lessons have the Swedish and Dutch Ministries of Defence and Armed Forces Headquarters, respectively, identified with regard to parallel planning and the integration of military capabilities and personnel?

1.2 Method

1.2.1 Interview-based Study

The study is mainly based on interviews. In total, 53 semi-structured interviews were conducted with Dutch, Swedish and international personnel directly involved in the planning and/or execution of the joint mission for Operation Atalanta. The interviews were conducted between April and June 2015 in the Seychelles, The Hague, Stockholm and the EUNAVFOR Operational Headquarters (OHQ) in Northwood, the United Kingdom (UK).

Interviews were held with personnel working at the EU military-strategic level, at the operational and tactical levels in the operations area and at the politico-strategic level and national headquarters level in the Netherlands and Sweden. More specifically, they involved:

- the Swedish Ministry of Defence,
- the Swedish Maritime Component Command,
- the Swedish Defence Staff,
- the Swedish Naval Department,
- the Dutch Ministry of Defence,
- the Dutch Naval Base Command,
- Dutch and Swedish personnel on board HNLMS *Johan de Witt*,
- FHQ staff officers in the personnel, intelligence, operations, logistics, and command and control/communication branches,
- OHQ staff officers in the personnel, intelligence, operations, logistics, joint effects, command and control/communication, and public affairs branches,
- Legal and Political Advisers from the OHQ Command Group,
- EUNAVFOR Liaison Officers (LNO) in Djibouti and the Seychelles.

For a full list of the functions of the officials interviewed for this study see Annex 1.

As a supplement to the interviews, various planning and conceptual documents on Operation Atalanta were consulted as well as a number of websites, primarily linked to the EU, the Dutch Ministry of Defence, the Swedish Armed Forces and the United Nations. Revision 4 of the EUNAVFOR Operations Plan (OPLAN), the Dutch-Swedish Concept of Operations (CONOPS) and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Netherlands and Sweden were all used for reference in the study. However, given that the OPLAN and the CONOPS are classified documents, they are not referred to in the text.

Furthermore, in April 2015, the authors visited HNLMS *Johan de Witt* during a port visit in Victoria, the Seychelles, and observed a search and rescue exercise with the Seychelles Air Force and Coastguard conducted off the coast on 10 April. The exercise was an activity as part of the Local Maritime Capacity Building (LMCB) programme, which is coordinated by the regional EU capacity-building mission, EUCAP Nestor.[9] The *Johan de Witt* supported the exercise as part of EUNAVFOR's third line of operation, to "support other EU missions and international organisations working to strengthen maritime security and capacity in the region".[10] Observing the exercise and visiting the ship provided the authors with valuable knowledge of and practical insights into the operation in general and Dutch-Swedish integration in particular.

1.2.2 Validity and Reliability of Results

Although the Dutch-Swedish cooperation in Operation Atalanta is a single case of military integration between two countries in an ongoing EU operation, which limits the appropriateness of generalising across contexts, key lessons and experiences can arguably still be of value to other countries interested in this kind of integrated cooperation.

As mentioned above, the interviewees represented a broad range of roles and functions, and had been involved in either the planning of the joint mission or its execution, and sometimes both. The authors were careful to interview both Dutch and Swedish representatives as well as different levels of seniority in order to capture possible divergences in perspectives and to ensure a representative analysis of the mission and well-founded conclusions. Interviews at the ministerial and headquarters levels provided an important perspective regarding the different stages in the planning of the mission. Interviews at the OHQ offered

[9] For more information about the exercise see EUNAVFOR Somalia, 2015a. *EU Naval Force Warship* HNLMS *Johan de Witt Carries Out Search and Rescue Exercise with Teams from the Seychelles and EUCAP Nestor*, http://eunavfor.eu/eu-naval-force-warship-hnlms-johan-de-witt-carries-out-search-and-rescue-exercise-with-teams-from-the-seychelles-and-eucap-nestor/ (accessed 8 July 2015).

[10] EUNAVFOR Somalia, 2015b. *Mission*, http://eunavfor.eu/mission/ (accessed 3 June 2015).

a complementary top-down perspective from the military-strategic level on how the integration was perceived to have worked.

The authors visited HNLMS *Johan de Witt* and the FHQ after they had been operational for about two months and soon after the rotation of Swedish personnel. Consequently, it is possible that conditions changed subsequently, or that other potential interviewees, who were present in the initial stages of the operation, might have had different views on the integration. However, the authors did not come across any information at a later stage which contradicted that provided by the interviewees on board the *Johan de Witt*, for example during the interviews conducted at the OHQ or at the national ministerial or headquarters levels.

In order to ascertain the scientific relevance, that is, that the text is understandable, logical, objective and based on a clear method, the report was reviewed by an expert on the subject as well as through FOI's internal review processes. Moreover, the report has been shared with the Swedish Armed Forces to verify that the facts provided are correct.

1.3 Structure of the Report

In order to contextualise the joint Dutch-Swedish mission, Chapter 2 provides some brief background on Operation Atalanta and describes the Netherlands' and Sweden's earlier contributions to the operation. Chapter 3 is dedicated to the planning and preparation phase. It describes the countries' respective contributions to this particular mission, and analyses the drivers of the collaboration and the various processes and activities that preceded the operation. Chapter 4 examines the implementation of the operation between February and May 2015. The chosen structures for command and control are discussed, as well as the integration of Dutch and Swedish enablers, assets and personnel. Issues pertaining to national regulations and procedures, including national caveats and diplomatic clearances, are dealt with separately and a specific section is dedicated to information technology (IT) and communications. Chapter 5 summarises the experiences and identifies possible lessons for the benefit of similar collaborations in the future.

2 Background

Both the Netherlands and Sweden have contributed to Operation Atalanta a number of times over the years. In the sections below, the history and development of EUNAVFOR are described, as well as previous Dutch and Swedish contributions to the mission.

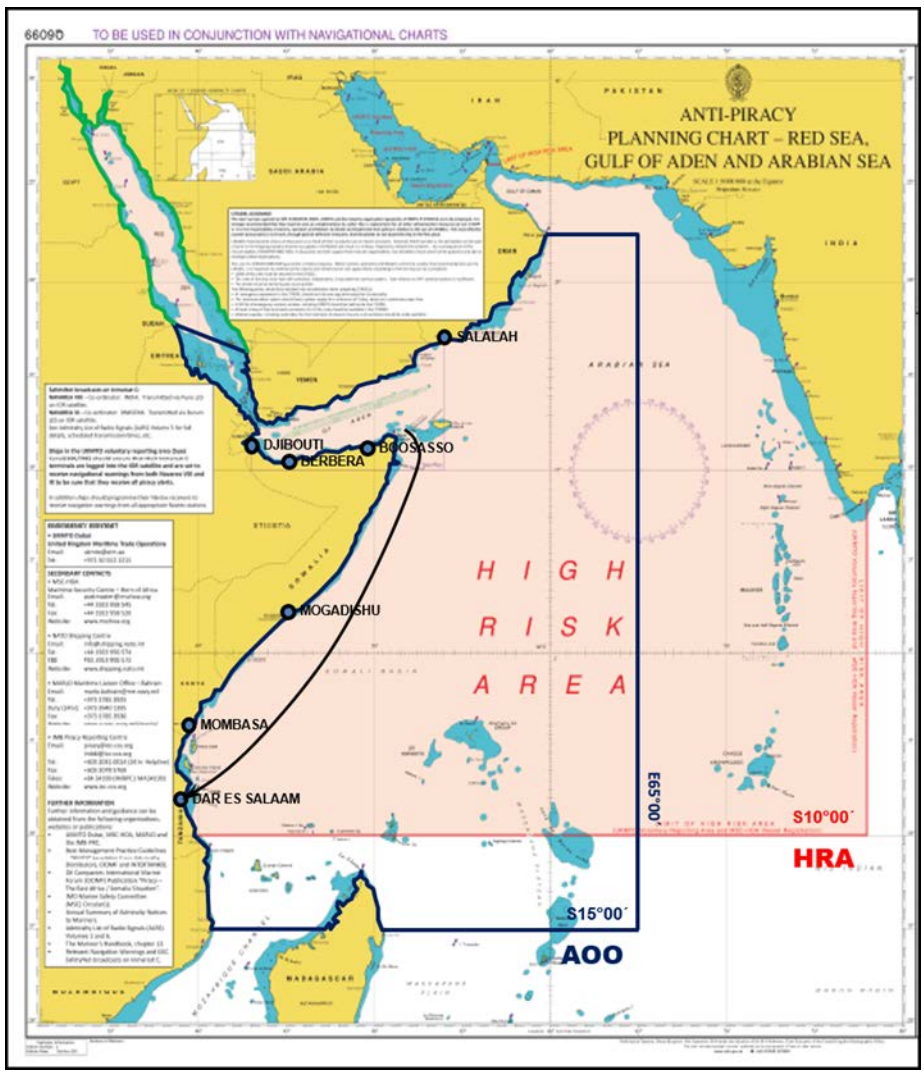

Figure 1 Area of Operations for Atalanta during the Dutch-Swedish mission

2.1 The Evolution of Operation Atalanta

Piracy is not a new phenomenon but has existed in numerous guises across the globe for thousands of years. Piracy has also existed in Somalia for a long time. During the 1990s, the incidence of pirate attacks varied from none to around 12 reported incidents per year.[11] In 2003, however, Somali piracy gained heightened international attention due to the increased number of vessels being attacked, including hijackings, in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia. In 2007, the World Food Programme (WFP) together with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) made an appeal to the international community for assistance with escorts of sea transports to Somalia carrying humanitarian aid. Following this appeal France, together with Denmark, the Netherlands and Canada, launched Operation Alcyon – a temporary military mission in support of WFP, which ran from November 2007 to February 2008. The chief task of Alcyon was to protect WFP convoys to Somalia from pirate activities.[12]

The United Nations (UN) adopted Security Council resolution 1816 in June 2008, and subsequently resolution 1838 in October the same year, condemning all acts of piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia. Based on Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the UN further encouraged states to take an active part in the fight against piracy, in particular by deploying naval vessels and military aircraft to the area.[13]

In response to this international call for action the EU decided to launch Operation Atalanta in November 2008, which de facto replaced Alcyon. Its OHQ was located to Northwood, UK.[14] According to the initial mandate, EUNAVFOR was to protect vessels, e.g. WFP and other vulnerable shipping; deter and disrupt piracy and armed robbery at sea; and monitor fishing activities off the coast of Somalia.[15] The mandate has since been extended three times and the current mandate runs until 12 December 2016. At the most recent extension in November 2014, a non-executive secondary support task was added to assist the other EU missions in the Horn of Africa – the military training mission EUTM Somalia and the regional maritime capacity-building mission EUCAP Nestor – within means and capabilities.[16] The aim was to contribute to the EU's comprehensive approach in the region by increasing the coherence between the

[11] Sörenson, 2011. p. 14.
[12] French Ministry of Defence, 2010. *L'opération Alcyon*, http://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/piraterie/dossier-de-presentation-des-operations/l-action-de-la-france-dans-la-lutte-contre-la-piraterie (accessed 8 July 2015).
[13] United Nations, 2008a. Resolution 1816, SC/9344; United Nations, 2008b. Resolution 1838, SC/9467.
[14] For a more detailed account of the operation and its background see Tham Lindell and Weibull, 2013. pp.15–20.
[15] Council of the European Union, 2008. Council Decision 2008/851/CFSP.
[16] Council of the European Union, 2014. Council Decision 2014/827/CFSP.

missions and thereby achieving a stronger and broader effect. This also forms part of EUNAVFOR's exit strategy.[17] To enable the execution of these secondary support tasks, the area of operations of Atalanta was extended to include a number of key points along the Somali coast, including Mogadishu.[18]

With the new mandate and the subsequently revised OPLAN, the mission gained an increased focus on intelligence operations and the collection of pattern-of-life intelligence on the daily lives of communities in Somali coastal areas.[19] The main reason for this shift of focus was that the number of piracy attacks had plummeted since 2012. No vessels were hijacked in 2013 or 2014.[20] Since the underlying threat remained, however, a higher and different degree of intelligence collection was required to be able to monitor the development of piracy. The shift is also based on a realisation that in order to tackle the root causes of the piracy, it is crucial to understand the political and security conditions in the coastal areas.[21]

EUNAVFOR is not the only actor fighting piracy in the region. The US-led Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), a 30-member multinational partnership, has three taskforces in the area, of which two work on counter-piracy and counterterrorism.[22] The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), for its part, conducts a separate counterpiracy operation named Ocean Shield, which primarily works to provide naval escorts and deter piracy-related activities.[23] Naturally, different degrees of coordination, including information sharing, are taking place between the operations to optimise their efforts, particularly between EUNAVFOR and Ocean Shield. In addition, numerous national efforts are being undertaken by different countries, for example China, India and Russia, which occasionally deploy naval ships to patrol or escort vessels in the area.

[17] Council of the European Union, 2014. Council Decision 2014/827/CFSP.
[18] Swedish Armed Forces, 2015a. *Svenska stridsbåtar utanför Mogadishu*, http://www.forsvarsmakten.se/sv/aktuellt/2015/03/svenska-stridsbatar-utanfor-mogadishu/ (accessed 7 July 2015); Swedish government, 2014. *Svenskt deltagande i Europeiska Unionens marina operation (Atalanta)*, Government Bill, 2014/15:14, p. 8.
[19] Council of the European Union, 2014. Council Decision 2014/827/CFSP; Jennings, 2015. "Swedish Air Force learns lessons for successful 'Atalanta' deployment with the Netherlands", *IHS Jane's Defence Weekly*, 27 April, http://www.janes.com/article/50993/swedish-air-force-learns-lessons-for-successful-atalanta-deployment-with-the-netherlands, (accessed 7 July 2015); Swedish government, 2014. p. 8.
[20] Swedish government, 2014. p. 6.
[21] Interviews 16 and 26; Council of the European Union, 2014; Swedish government, 2014. p. 8.
[22] Combined Maritime Forces, 2015. *About CMF*, http://combinedmaritimeforces.com/about (accessed 7 July 2015).
[23] NATO, 2015. *Operation Ocean Shield*, http://www.mc.nato.int/ops/Pages/OOS.aspx (accessed July 2015).

2.2 Previous Contributions to Operation Atalanta by the Netherlands and Sweden

The Netherlands

The Netherlands has been a staunch contributor to counter-piracy operations in the Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden for some time. Dutch Navy frigates were operating in Somali waters from as early as 2008 to help fight piracy and escort ships for WFP.[24] The Netherlands has been part of Operation Atalanta since 2009, contributing three tours a year to the mission. Dutch engagement has decreased somewhat due to the drop in piracy activities in recent years.[25] This is not the first time that HNLMS *Johan de Witt* has participated in Operation Atalanta. In 2013, the Netherlands deployed the warship to the area of operations and commanded the FHQ on board the vessel.[26]

In addition to its engagement in Operation Atalanta, the Netherlands has participated in Ocean Shield. Since 2011 it has also occasionally deployed so-called Vessel Protection Detachments (VPDs), i.e. military security teams comprised of Dutch marines, to protect particularly vulnerable or large national sea transports in the area.[27]

Sweden

Like the Netherlands, Sweden has been a trusted contributor to Atalanta since its start and has previously contributed naval capabilities in 2009, 2010 and 2013.[28] The first military contribution to Atalanta consisted of two corvettes, one support vessel and a VPD. The second contribution was the naval warship *HMS Carlskrona*, two helicopters and a boarding team. During this time Sweden also commanded the FHQ, which was based on board the *Carlskrona*. In 2013, *HMS Carlskrona* was again sent to serve in the operation accompanied by two helicopters.[29] In addition to the military contributions, the Swedish Coastguard

[24] Dutch Ministry of Defence, 2015a. *Frigates protect World Food Programme*, https://www.defensie.nl/english/topics/somalia/contents/frigates-protect-world-food-programme (accessed 6 July 2015).
[25] Interview 30; Dutch Ministry of Defence, 2015b. *Counterpiracy*, https://www.defensie.nl/english/topics/somalia/contents/counterpiracy (accessed 6 July 2015).
[26] Swedish Armed Forces, 2015b. *Sverige leder EU:s sjögående styrkehögkvarter*, http://blogg.forsvarsmakten.se/marinbloggen/2015/01/21/sverige-leder-eus-sjogaende-styrkehogkvarter/ (accessed 6 July 2015).
[27] Dutch Ministry of Defence, 2015b; Dutch Ministry of Defence, 2015c. *Security Teams on Ships*, https://www.defensie.nl/english/topics/somalia/contents/security-teams-on-ships (accessed 6 July 2015).
[28] Swedish Armed Forces, 2015c. *Somalia – EUNAVFOR*, http://www.forsvarsmakten.se/sv/var-verksamhet/internationella-insatser/avslutade/truppinsatser/somalia-eu-navfor (accessed 6 July 2015).
[29] Tham Lindell and Weibull, 2013. pp. 21-22.

has twice participated in the operation using sea-surveillance aircraft, most recently in 2013.[30]

In addition to their operational contributions both the Netherlands and Sweden have regularly sent staff officers to the EUNAVFOR OHQ in Northwood.

[30] Swedish Coast Guard, 2015. *KBV501 på plats på Sicilien*, http://www.kustbevakningen.se/granslos-samverkan/nyhetsarkiv/kbv-501-pa-plats-pa-sicilien (accessed 7 July 2015).

3 Planning and Preparation Phase

The collaboration between the Netherlands and Sweden within Operation Atalanta was preceded by various processes and considerable preparation. This chapter describes why and how the cooperation was initiated and the subsequent activities required to facilitate the mission, including visits and training activities.

3.1 The Content of Contributions

The Netherlands

To the joint mission with Sweden, the Netherlands contributed the warship HNLMS *Johan de Witt*, one maritime helicopter (NH90), one landing craft utility (LCU) – a type of boat used for transporting equipment, vehicles and troops to shore,[31] four fast boats,[32] a boarding team and staff officers for the FHQ. The bulk of the Dutch personnel on board the ship were from the Royal Marine Corps.

As mentioned above, the *Johan de Witt* had been used in Operation Atalanta previously to host the FHQ and is specifically adapted for hosting international staffs. Being a multi-purpose Landing Platform Dock (LPD), the ship has some advanced capabilities and is able to embark, transport and disembark an entire Marine Corps battalion. The ship can accommodate up to 600 people. It has a flight hangar, which can accommodate up to six medium-weight helicopters, a well-deck, a vehicle deck and an enhanced medical facility with a fully equipped operating theatre.[33] In sum, the ship is a dock, hotel, airport, office, hospital and parking facility all at the same time.[34]

Sweden

The Swedish contribution consisted of two Combat Boat 90 (CB90) fast assault craft, two helicopters (AW109), one Combat Camera specialist, and a Force Commander and staff officers in the FHQ.[35] This is the third time Sweden has

[31] British Royal Navy, 2015. *Landing Craft*, http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/the-equipment/commando/landing-craft (accessed 7 July 2015).
[32] So-called Fast Raiding Interception and Special Forces Craft (FRISCs)
[33] EUNAVFOR Somalia, 2013. HNLMS *Johan De Witt Joins EU Naval Force Operation Atalanta*, http://eunavfor.eu/hnlms-johan-de-witt-joins-eu-naval-force-operation-atalanta-2/ (accessed 7 July 2015); The Netherlands Ministry of Defence, 2015d. *Amphibious Transport Ships*, https://www.defensie.nl/english/organisation/navy/contents/materiel/ships/amphibious-transport-ships (accessed 7 July 2015).
[34] Commanding Officer for the Swedish contingent to Operation Atalanta, 2015. *Introductory Brief*, 5 April, Johan de Witt, Port Victoria, the Seychelles.
[35] EUNAVFOR Somalia, 2015c. *EU Naval Force's New Force Headquarters: A Profile*, http://eunavfor.eu/eu-naval-forces-new-force-headquarters-a-profile (accessed 28 May 2015).

contributed AW109 helicopters to the operation. The Swedish contingent consisted of 77 personnel. The First Marine Regiment was responsible for organising the contingent.[36]

3.2 Rationale behind the Collaboration

The fusion of Dutch and Swedish forces in Operation Atalanta resulted from both countries having identified shared interests. Collaboration was simply a win-win situation. Sweden was interested in leading Operation Atalanta's FHQ but lacked an appropriate flagship, while the Netherlands wanted to send HNLMS *Johan de Witt* but lacked a staff.[37]

In addition, there were a number of other drivers of the cooperation. For the Netherlands, the collaboration was in line with its defence policy to develop international cooperation within operations.[38] In recent years, the navies of the Netherlands and Belgium, for example, have markedly increased their cooperation, and their two national operational naval staffs together form a single staff – the Admiralty Benelux.[39] Notably, in addition to various joint exercises, Sweden and the Netherlands were already cooperating in Mali within the framework of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Both countries contribute there to the UN Mission's All Sources Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU), which produces intelligence for the mission. Interviewees noted that at the time of the decision to collaborate on Operation Atalanta, the Netherlands was already interested in and inspired by the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO) – a structure for political and military cooperation between the Nordic countries – and was interested in working with Sweden.[40] Sweden is not one of the Netherlands' primary strategic partners, but it is viewed as an important partner for international cooperation.[41] Moreover, one interviewee noted that the cooperation benefited from the Netherlands and Sweden having similar views on the future direction of Operation Atalanta.[42]

There was a National Election in Sweden in 2014. A Social Democrat Prime Minister was elected on 3 October to lead a minority government consisting of the Social Democrats and the Greens. This change of government introduced some uncertainty about the future political direction in terms of support for

[36] Commanding Officer for the Swedish contingent in Operation Atalanta, 2015.
[37] Interviews 7 and 30.
[38] Email correspondence with the Netherlands Ministry of Defence, 29 April 2015.
[39] For more, see Royal Netherlands Navy, "Admiralty Benelux", https://www.defensie.nl/english/organisation/navy/contents/navy-units/admiralty-benelux.
[40] Interviews 30 and 53.
[41] Interview 32.
[42] Interview 7.

various international operations, including Operation Atalanta, especially in the light of the growing interest in returning to UN peace operations.[43] That said, the Swedish Armed Forces considered participation in Operation Atalanta to be a valuable opportunity to develop their naval capabilities.[44] Moreover, leading the FHQ would enhance its command and control capabilities, and Sweden does tend to contribute to EU operations more generally.[45] The Swedish Armed Forces had also continued to contribute staff to the OHQ and had personnel in the region.

The fact that the contribution would take the form of a collaboration between Sweden and the Netherlands sparked political interest in both countries.[46] Such collaboration would not only result in cost savings, but, importantly, be in line with the increasing focus on "Pooling and Sharing" as a way to reduce costs.[47] Both Sweden and the Netherlands were interested in developing the concept, and there was a mutual interest in working together based on the perception that the two countries were similar in many ways, both politically and operationally. One Dutch interviewee believed there was an interest in working with the Nordic countries in the future, and that more institutionalised cooperation would allow for more substantial gains in the long run.[48] Another interviewee suggested that the experience gained in Operation Atalanta could kick-start a deeper collaboration between the two navies, which could for example involve an exchange of officers on board ships.[49]

As noted above, the collaboration within Operation Atalanta was also a good fit in terms of capabilities. Initially, for example, it was unclear whether the Netherlands was going to provide any helicopters, which Sweden could. The LPD HNLMS *Johan de Witt* was appropriate for the cooperation not only because it was capable of hosting an FHQ, but also because it had a number of different capabilities that made it suitable for carrying out the tasks envisaged in support of the comprehensive approach to the region set out in the revised OPLAN.[50]

The collaboration also meant burden sharing in terms of costs. It has not been possible for the authors of this report to ascertain the extent to which costs were reduced through greater efficiency or achieving synergies. Interviewees believed that costs had been reduced for both countries but it was emphasised that many of the most important gains were less tangible, including improved international

[43] Interview 53.
[44] Interviews 52 and 53.
[45] Interview 52.
[46] Interviews 32, 52 and 53.
[47] European Defence Agency, "EDA's Pooling & Sharing", Fact sheet, last updated 30 January 2013.
[48] Interview 7.
[49] Interview 30.
[50] Interview 53.

cooperation and the building of contacts between the two countries.[51] One Swedish interviewee suggested that the large ship and its ability for example to stock up with fuel had cut costs in terms of fuel transport.[52] Fundamentally, however, costs were automatically reduced by the two countries as they shouldered different aspects of the contribution. Ultimately, collaborating in this way allowed Sweden to contribute the Force Commander and staff, which it otherwise would not have been able to do. While the price tag for Sweden's contribution in 2013 of *HMS Carlskrona* was more than 210 million SEK, the contribution in 2015 cost Sweden around 75 million SEK.[53] Obviously, this sharp cost reduction reflected Sweden' notably smaller contribution to the operation in 2015 compared with 2013.

3.3 Timeline

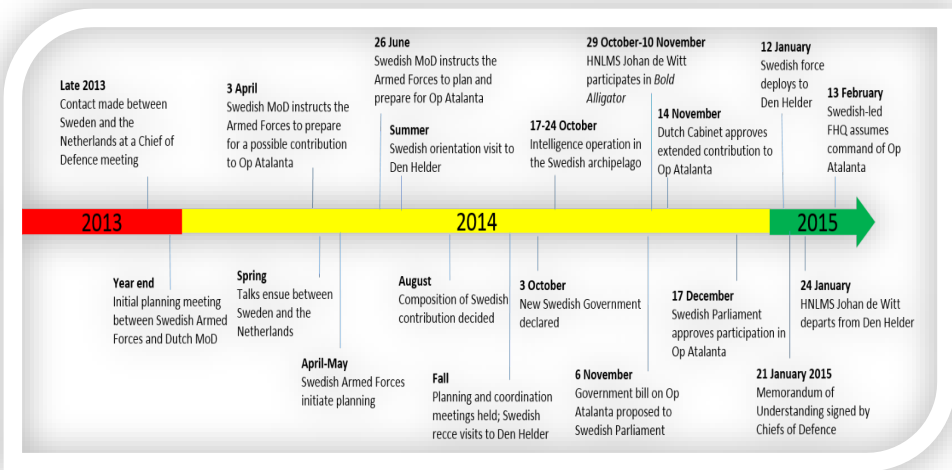

Figure 2 Timeline for the Planning and Preparation Phase

[51] Interview 30 and 31.
[52] Interview 51.
[53] Interviews 52 and 53.

3.4 Policymaking Processes

Initial contacts were made between the two countries at a Chiefs of Defence meeting in late 2013 and between military representatives in Brussels.[54] Around the turn of the year, the Swedish Armed Forces had a planning meeting with the Dutch Ministry of Defence, when the Netherlands presented various alternatives for ships that they could provide during the specific time slot. However, Sweden preferred an option where it did not have to fully staff a Dutch ship. This was seen as too complicated as it would have required Sweden to become familiar with the total environment and all the systems. In addition, it was considered an advantage that Dutch personnel were members of NATO.[55]

One challenge for the planning was that HNLMS *Johan de Witt* was scheduled to participate in Bold Alligator, a naval exercise which ran off the east coast of the United States from 29 October to 10 November 2014.[56] This would limit the time available for preparing the ship for Operation Atalanta.[57] Nonetheless, it was agreed that its capabilities made it the most suitable vessel for the tour. It should be added that much of the Swedish Armed Forces' attention was directed towards operations in Swedish waters in October 2014, following that a foreign submarine had violated Swedish territorial integrity, and preparations for deploying troops to MINUSMA.[58]

The Swedish Ministry of Defence instructed the Swedish Armed Forces to start preparing for a possible contribution to Operation Atalanta on 3 April 2014, based on the premise that participation would be carried out together with the Netherlands. Talks between the two armed forces and ministries of defence continued during the spring of 2014.[59]

On 26 June, the Swedish Armed Forces were instructed by the Swedish Ministry of Defence to start planning and preparation for their definite participation in a mission on board a Dutch ship, comprising an FHQ, helicopters and combat boats with crews. The Swedish Government put a bill before the Swedish Parliament (*Riksdagen*) on 6 November 2014 to permit the government to provide Operation Atalanta with a military contribution.[60] On 17 December

[54] Interview 53.
[55] Interview 53.
[56] For more information on Bold Alligator see http://www.public.navy.mil/usff/ba/Pages/default.aspx
[57] Interview 3.
[58] Interview 50. See also e.g. *BBC*, "Sweden releases sonar image confirming 'foreign submarine'", 14 November 2014; and Dan Bilefsky, "Sweden Says Mystery Vessel in Its Waters Was a Foreign Submarine", *New York Times*, 14 November 2014.
[59] Interview 1.
[60] Regeringens proposition 2014/15:14, "Svenskt deltagande i Europeiska unionens marina operation (Atalanta)", *https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/Forslag/Propositioner-och-skrivelser/Svenskt-deltagande-i-Europeisk_H20314/?text=true*

2014, parliament gave the green light to the government's proposal for Sweden to participate in Operation Atalanta in 2015.[61]

In the Netherlands, in accordance with article 100 of the Dutch Constitution, the government must inform parliament (the States General) of any use of the armed forces to maintain or promote the international legal order. Thus, there is no need for parliamentary approval, but the Dutch Cabinet must submit a letter informing parliament about the intended mission. In Sweden, by contrast, parliament must provide ultimate approval for any military operation.

The initial intention in the Netherlands had reportedly been to get a decision on the joint mission before the summer of 2014, and in the beginning of July the Ministry of Defence gave its minister background information on the collaboration.[62] The formal decision was however taken on 14 November 2014, when the Dutch Cabinet approved the proposal of the Foreign Minister and the Defence Minister to extend its participation in Operation Atalanta by one year.[63]

The different decision-making processes of the Netherlands and Sweden caused some minor hurdles in terms of synchronising timelines, for instance delaying the issuing of a press release to announce the bilateral collaboration. The dialogue between the two countries was good, however, and the ministries kept each other informed of progress, resolving any problems without difficulty. One governmental interviewee suggested that the collaboration would have benefited from representatives of the ministries having met in person earlier in order to clarify the way forward, including the different timelines and decision-making processes.[64]

The Memorandum of Understanding, specifying issues such as cost reimbursements, was signed on 21 January 2015.[65] Sweden paid the Netherlands for board and lodging, fuel and various services including the use of medical facilities. The wording of the document had been finalised quite quickly, but its signing was delayed because the Netherlands wanted it to be signed at the level of the Chiefs of Defence.[66] This slight delay was not thought to have affected the

[61] Sveriges Riksdag, "Betänkande 2014/15:UFöU1 Svenskt deltagande i Europeiska unionens marina operation (Atalanta)", *http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/Utskottens-dokument/Betankanden/Arenden/201415/UFoU1/*.

[62] Interview 52 and email correspondence with the Netherlands Ministry of Defence, 28 April 2015.

[63] Government of the Netherlands, "Netherlands to extend its contribution to EU counter-piracy mission", News, 14 November 2014, http://www.government.nl/news/2014/11/17/netherlands-to-extend-its-contribution-to-eu-counter-piracy-mission.html.

[64] Interview 52.

[65] Memorandum of Understanding between the Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Swedish Armed Forces concering the deployment of a Swedish Military Contingent on board of HNLMS *Johan de Witt* in support of EU NAVFOR Atalanta, 2015, 21 January.

[66] Interviews 7 and 53.

operation or collaboration in any way. One Dutch interviewee noted that HNLMS *Johan de Witt* was given no opportunity to provide input into the Memorandum of Understanding until a very late stage.[67] This may have caused some practical issues to be insufficiently addressed, such as diplomatic clearances and under whose tactical control the Swedish military units would be during transit from the Netherlands to the area of operations (see section 4.4). Separately, it was noted that no technical security agreement was signed between the two countries.[68] Such an agreement might have facilitated collaboration, for example, with regard to crypto systems (see section 4.5).

3.5 Recce Visits and Preparations

During the summer of 2014, it became clear what each country's contributions would consist of. While discussions were in full swing, mainly between the military forces, during the spring of 2014, it was not until the summer that actual planning and preparations commenced.[69] A number of meetings were held between Dutch and Swedish representatives during the autumn of 2014 to plan and coordinate the collaboration. Primarily, representatives of the Swedish Armed Forces conducted reconnaissance (recce) trips to Den Helder to work out practical arrangements. Initially, during the summer, the Swedish Armed Forces conducted an orientation visit to Den Helder and HNLMS *Johan de Witt* to exchange experiences and discuss possibilities.[70] A number of visits then took place during the autumn, including with representatives of the planned FHQ, the Joint Forces Command, the Swedish Air Force, the CB 90 unit, the helicopter detachment, Communications, Logistics, the Training and Procurement Staff, and the Swedish Defence Materiel Administration.[71] Representatives of the Dutch Logistics Unit also visited Stockholm.[72]

Both Dutch and Swedish interviewees believed the recce visits to have been most valuable and helpful, not least in terms of initiating contacts and communication between counterparts.[73] The fact that the *Johan de Witt* was out of port for some time, especially for the naval exercise Bold Alligator, made the visits even more important. It also called for some special solutions. Some of the IT and communications preparations for example had to be worked out in a simulated environment in the Netherlands. This reportedly worked well.[74] The recce trips allowed potential issues to be identified and addressed. Among the issues that

[67] Interview 17.
[68] Interview 8.
[69] Interview 50.
[70] Interview 33.
[71] Interviews 8, 13, 33 and 43.
[72] Interview 2.
[73] Interviews 13 and 18.
[74] Interview 8.

arose was the ability of the ship to accommodate Swedish helicopters, given that they cannot fold their rotor blades.[75] This question was subsequently resolved.

Nonetheless, a couple of Swedish interviewees saw scope for improving these visits in terms of better coordination on the Swedish side.[76] One respondent, for example, said that some of the people who had travelled to the Netherlands were not subsequently part of the mission, did not ask the right questions and did not necessarily meet the right people.[77] Another respondent noted that there was a tendency to overlook intelligence units during these trips, and that there had been no interaction with Dutch intelligence colleagues prior to deployment.

During the planning phase there was some discussion about which enablers the two countries should bring. Initially, for example, it was not clear whether this would include any of the Netherlands' helicopters.[78] The subsequent decision by the Netherlands to provide NH90 helicopters led to some discussions about whether the same crews could handle both helicopters. This was resolved smoothly during planning by both countries providing crews.[79] Another area that was debated was the medical treatment facility on board the ship. There was a general shortage of such capabilities, especially in the light of other ongoing operations, e.g. in Mali and Afghanistan.[80] Sweden was not able to staff the facility, and in the end the Netherlands decided to take on the Role 2 function.[81] One interviewee noted that this was a missed opportunity for Sweden's medical unit to gain experience of Role 2 care at sea.[82] For the Netherlands it meant both that the capability could not be provided elsewhere and a tighter training schedule for parts of the Dutch team.[83]

Similarly, there appears to have been some uncertainty about the provision of interpreters, a scarce capability in both the Netherlands and Sweden.[84] This resulted in the mission only having one Somali interpreter and one who spoke Farsi and Arabic, which was widely seen as insufficient, especially given the focus on carrying out so-called friendly approaches.[85]

[75] Interview 33
[76] Interviews 14 and 43.
[77] Interview 14.
[78] Interviews 1, 33 and 53.
[79] Interview 53.
[80] Interview 53.
[81] Interviews 1 and 33. A Role 2 function denotes the capability to provide advanced trauma management and emergency medical treatment, including continuation of resuscitation started in Role 1.
[82] Interview 1.
[83] Interview 33.
[84] Interview 33.
[85] Interviews 12, 21, 29 and 33. Friendly approaches are a friendly and voluntary interaction with local seafarers who are not suspected of being engaged in acts of piracy.

One major problem was that HNLMS *Johan de Witt* would not be available in time to take over from the Italian-led FHQ. This was discussed with OHQ, and Italy agreed to extend its deployment in the area of operations, while the Dutch ship received the green light to deploy for a shorter rotation of three months rather than the normal four.

Communication between the two countries during the preparation phase was assessed as having worked very well. Like the political decision-making procedures, however, it was a learning process for both the Netherlands and Sweden to understand each other's strategic command structures. While the mission would have a dedicated desk function within the Swedish Armed Forces, the Royal Netherlands Navy handed these tasks over to the Ministry of Defence as soon as the operation began. This did not have any direct effect on the mission, but meant for example that the idea of having a Swedish LNO in the Netherlands, although agreed by the Netherlands, became less relevant.[86]

3.6 Training and Transit

The participation of HNLMS *Johan de Witt* in Bold Alligator followed by winter holidays shrank the window of opportunity for preparations for Operation Atalanta.[87] The time available to adapt the ship for the Swedish enablers and to conduct joint training was reduced still further when bad weather delayed HMS *Belos* which transported the Swedish combat boats and containers to Den Helder. Equipment for the Dutch boats was also delayed.[88] Bad weather in Den Helder then threw yet another spanner in the works by preventing some planned integration training.[89] The result was that much of the training had to be conducted during the pre-deployment training (PDT) in transit to the area of operations. Interviewees said the tight schedule linked to Bold Alligator put pressure on personnel. Others argued that another one or two weeks would have benefited the preparation of e.g. materiel.[90] On the positive side, the fact that Swedish Armed Forces also participated in Bold Alligator and that a number of recce visits had been carried out facilitated cooperation.[91]

HNLMS *Johan de Witt* departed Den Helder on 24 January 2015. Most of the training was subsequently completed during the PDT, which was considered to have been successful and extremely important for the cooperation.[92] The PDT allowed units to become familiar with language, procedures and capabilities.

[86] Interview 50.
[87] Interview 3, 18, 33.
[88] Interviews 3 and 29.
[89] Interview 18.
[90] Interviews 12, 18 and 33.
[91] Interview 18.
[92] Interviews 12, 24, 25, 27, 29 and 30.

Exercises were conducted off the coasts of Malaga, Spain, as well as off Malta and Crete. However, bad weather followed the ship and some exercises had to be cancelled in the Mediterranean.[93] The Swedish combat boats only went out twice, off Malaga and Crete, and tabletop exercises were used successfully instead to prepare for planning.[94] This meant, for example, that a three-day operation with the LCU was done only when the ship was already in the area of operations, off the coast of Somalia.[95] This, however, had no direct negative effects on operations.

Importantly, the PDT facilitated the rotation of Swedish personnel half way into the tour.[96] While the Dutch crew stayed on board throughout the deployment, some of the Swedish officers rotated in Dar es Salaam. The whole Swedish contingent participated in the PDT, however, which proved crucial as it meant that the second team was already used to the setting and routines of the ship when it took over.[97]

During the transit period from Den Helder, work also continued on the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which had begun in November 2014.[98] While most of the SOPs were ready by the time the ship sailed through the Suez Canal, not all were on paper.[99] This delay was not thought to have affected operations, but it was seen as having prevented higher-level training during the PDT.[100]

Training for the FHQ largely consisted of Joint Mission Preparation (JMP) – a week of preparations in December 2014 at the OHQ in Northwood. A majority of the FHQ completed the JMP. More than 30 of the total 40 people in the Swedish-led FHQ participated, which is one of the highest ever participation rates, and all branches were represented.[101] While the number of participants naturally reflected the size of the FHQ, this could for example be compared with the FHQ that followed it, which was to participate in the JMP with about one-third of its total number of staff members.[102] At the same time, however, participation by the Swedish-led FHQ was not total, and it was noted that one country could not afford to join the JMP.[103] The JMP had just been redesigned in time for the

[93] Interview 29.
[94] Interview 3.
[95] Interviews 19 and 27.
[96] Interviews 23 and 25.
[97] Interviews 18, 23 and 25.
[98] Interview 29.
[99] Interview 3.
[100] Interviews 3 and 29.
[101] Interviews 36, 41 and 45.
[102] Interviews 41 and 45.
[103] Interview 20.

Swedish-led FHQ's participation to improve the content and make it more task-oriented.[104]

The preparatory week at the OHQ was said to have been highly valuable in terms of developing a fuller understanding of the issues and establishing personal links between people who would be in regular contact by telephone or email during the mission.[105]

It is notable that most of the FHQ travelled with the ship from Den Helder. Many of the Swedish officers arrived in the Netherlands on 12 January, some 12 days before departure.[106] The transit period gave staff some extra time to prepare for their tasks, including reading planning documents in detail.[107] The OHQ also appreciated the time invested in preparation, noting that the relatively long transit meant the FHQ pretty much hit the road running when it took over from the Italian-led FHQ.[108] Workloads appear to have varied among the various functions, however, and, while recognising the practicality of sailing down with the rest of the ship, some interviewees said a shorter preparation time would have sufficed for parts of the FHQ.[109]

[104] Interview 41.
[105] Interviews 18, 28, 41, 42, 45 and 46.
[106] Interview 20.
[107] Interviews 23 and 36.
[108] Interview 41.
[109] Interviews 13 and 20.

4 Implementation Phase

On 13 February 2015, the Swedish-led multinational FHQ assumed command of Operation Atalanta on board the Dutch ship HNLMS *Johan de Witt*. This was also the starting point for an integrated collaboration in the area of operations between the Swedish and Dutch enablers and assets on board the Dutch flagship, which would last until 6 May 2015. This chapter describes how the collaborative set-up was structured and functioned, and the lessons learned – positive as well as negative.

4.1 Command and Control

A fundamental prerequisite for successfully combining the two countries' military personnel and assets was the creation of effective command and control structures. This section discusses the integration of Dutch and Swedish forces, and the command and control structures chosen for the FHQ and its flagship. The collaborations with EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta's two sister missions – EUCAP Nestor and EUTM Somalia – are also discussed.

4.1.1 Fully Integrated Forces

Initially, during the planning phase, the intention was for the Swedish units to be organised separately from the Dutch ones with their own chain of command.[110] Accordingly, the Dutch Commanding Officer (CO) of HNLMS *Johan de Witt* would have given orders to the CO of the Swedish contingent, who would then have led the Swedish units. However, after discussion, the CO of the ship and the head of the Swedish contingent agreed early on that this was not a natural, practical solution. Instead, it was decided that the Swedish enablers would be a fully integrated part of the Dutch ship.

Subsequently, both the Dutch crew and the Swedish contingent were under the control of the Commanding Officer of the *Johan de Witt*. In addition, he acted as Senior Representative for the Dutch staff in the FHQ. The CO of the Swedish contingent was in charge of the Swedish staff both on the ship and in the FHQ, including the Swedish Force Commander. This meant CO of the Swedish contingent was ultimately in charge of personnel issues and disciplinary action. The Force Commander, for his part, was the Senior Swedish Representative. Importantly, the head of the Swedish contingent jointly planned operations and activities involving the Swedish units with the Commanding Officer and the Executive Officer of the ship. In this way, the Swedish contingent leader could signal early on whether, for example, there were any restrictions on how the

[110] Interviews 3 and 17.

Swedish forces could be used. Furthermore, the head of the Swedish contingent was a so-called red card holder, which meant he was empowered to veto any tasks or activities assigned to the Swedish forces. The fact that he was involved in the planning from an early stage clearly reduced the need for him to exercise this power.

In the same way, the units – the helicopter detachment and boat group – were also mixed. While for example the Dutch marines had their own vessels and the Swedes theirs, these were all coordinated by a Dutch officer with the most senior Swede in rank acting as deputy. Similarly, there was only one Flight Commander for all the helicopters. Various functions then had to be assigned to officers depending on their specific expertise. Thus, the Commanding Officer of the ship did not task the Swedish and Dutch units separately but only addressed one person in the chain of command. In the same way, this full integration meant that Dutch forces did not have to change their existing command and control structure.

The fully integrated model was assessed as having worked very well and the chain of command was seen as clear.[111] The personality and leadership style of the Commanding Officer of HNLMS *Johan de Witt* was deemed to have played a positive and important role in creating an open, pragmatic atmosphere, by emphasising that the mission was a joint effort of the two countries.[112] In addition, the CO of the Swedish contingent was considered to have taken a constructive approach.

While the integration of Swedish enablers was in general said to have worked well and been executed at the correct level, a few interviewees argued that the integration of the amphibious unit had possibly been at a too low a level.[113] One believed integration normally worked best when done at a higher level, as national forces tended to execute tasks differently at the more operational, combat level, including the giving of orders.[114] One interviewee, who thought the level of integration chosen for Operation Atalanta appeared to have been about right, noted that if units are integrated at a too low a level, language might become a problem as people tend to revert to their own language in times of stress even if English is the official language.[115]

One initial source of friction related to the high level of integration that was brought up by a number of interviewees was the different styles of leadership and different mission command processes of the Netherland and Sweden. The Swedish forces are used to a highly structured mission command process, where

[111] Interviews 3, 12, 17, 18 and 29.
[112] Interview 3.
[113] Interviews 12 and 27.
[114] Interview 12.
[115] Interview 53.

the commanding officer gives an order together with clearly defined objectives of the tasks. He or she would then take a step back and allow the unit to carry out the assigned tasks. It took some time for all of the Swedish personnel to fully understand the Dutch planning procedures, which were viewed by some Swedes as more ad hoc and informal.[116] The Dutch forces used the format of "briefs" where the tasks were discussed and planned in a more dynamic and inclusive way. The Swedish units did not always perceive that the objectives and related requirements had been clearly stated. While the Swedish personnel got used to and gained an understanding of this planning process, it highlights an area where different routines and practices hampered fully effective collaboration, if only initially. It also underlined the value of the PDT, during which coordination can be rehearsed and insight gained into the different leadership styles.

Some interviewees noted a difference in some areas in the level of expertise of the troops from the two countries, reflecting different systems of military education and training. One respondent noted that Dutch crew members tended to be more specialised than the Swedish ones, who instead have broader know-how.[117] The Netherlands has a fairly strong Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) system in which their NCOs specialise in certain areas of expertise early on in their career and then focus their efforts and training on that specific area, which explains these differences.

The Dutch system was perceived by several Swedish interviewees as strictly hierarchical, which was a little unusual for them.[118] In particular, the sharp line between officers and NCOs was noted. One Swedish respondent, for example, said that as an NCO he could not dine with his Dutch colleagues, who were officers and had a separate mess, which meant the loss of a valuable venue for strengthening relationships with his counterparts. Another Swedish interviewee maintained that it was sometimes difficult to earn the same level of respect as an NCO when holding an officer's position.[119]

While the Dutch personnel stayed throughout the deployment, Sweden decided to rotate some of its staff half way through the tour. People in key leadership roles were not changed, however, to ensure continuity. The Swedish helicopter and combat boat units and the Combat Camera officer rotated once. One Swedish intelligence officer and one Swedish intelligence assistant also rotated but, because of the limited number of available imagery intelligence (IMINT) analysts, the person in that position remained on the ship throughout. The decision to rotate personnel was based on a wish to increase the number of Swedish soldiers who would gain experience and knowledge from the

[116] Interviews 10, 11, 12 and 13.
[117] Interviews 13 and 28.
[118] Interviews 11, 23, 26 and 28.
[119] Interview 11.

mission.[120] In addition, it allowed for rest and recuperation, e.g. for the helicopter wing which had previously been deployed in Afghanistan.[121] The rotation had to be synchronised with the Netherlands in order to identify a suitable port and time for the change of personnel. Importantly, however, the whole Swedish contingent participated in the PDT while sailing to the area of operation. Interviewees said this full participation was crucial as it meant that the new team was already used to the setting and routines of the ship when the baton was handed over to the second team after only a few hours in Dar es Salaam.[122]

4.1.2 The FHQ

Organisational Structure

The situation of having an FHQ led by a different country to that of the flagship host was a first. Normally, the Force Commander would be of the same nationality as the Commanding Officer of the ship. According to interviewees, this can at times result in lines becoming blurred between the FHQ and the ship's HQ, especially as the Force Commander would be more senior than the ship's Commanding Officer.[123] On the other hand, the risk that the Force Commander might interfere with the daily operations of the ship arguably does not disappear with the Force Commander and the ship's Commanding Officer being of different nationalities. However, interviewees were in agreement that no such problems emerged with the chain of command.[124] Instead, it was noted that the Force Commander emphasised that the FHQ was not part of HNLMS *Johan de Witt*, and that the ship was only one of several ships under his command.[125] Conversely, the fact that the *Johan de Witt* hosted the FHQ did arguably restrict the use of the ship somewhat, as its itinerary depended on the tasks of the FHQ, which included various visits.[126] It was noted that the ship's CO and the Force Commander appeared to have had a good and civil relationship and that any minor issues that emerged were quickly resolved; and that the relatively long transit period to the area of operations had allowed any issues to be resolved in advance.[127]

The Swedish-led FHQ was bigger than a regular FHQ. While the FHQ of Operation Atalanta typically comprised some 30 personnel, the Swedish-led FHQ had 40 staff members – 15 Swedish, 9 Dutch and the remaining 16 from 12

[120] Interview 3.
[121] Interview 43.
[122] Interviews 18, 23 and 25.
[123] Interview 22.
[124] Interview 29
[125] Interview 17.
[126] Interview 26.
[127] Interview 9.

different countries. The FHQ thus included a relatively large group of Dutch personnel, some of whom had positions of influence.[128] The informal lines which developed between the Dutch personnel in the FHQ and HNLMS *Johan de Witt* were seen as having facilitated interaction between the FHQ and its flagship.[129] The formal chain of command, however, was not contested and the OPS officer on the *Johan de Witt* had formal contacts with the FHQ, mainly on issues related to the use of the ship.

One reason for the more sizeable FHQ was simply that HNLMS *Johan de Witt* was large enough to accommodate it.[130] The additional 10 or so staff allowed the FHQ to carry out more activities without encountering problems running two operations in parallel.[131] It was probably easier for the sizeable FHQ to operationalise the revised OPLAN.[132] Indeed, the general view at OHQ was that the Swedish-led FHQ had been noticeably flexible and active, with a relatively high battle rhythm.[133] Even though the FHQ's rotation period was shorter than normal, the number of operations it conducted stood out. One interviewee noted for example that during one key operation, some 25 friendly approaches had been conducted in only one week, compared to about one friendly approach the week before.[134] In addition, the FHQ arranged meetings with local Somali leaders and provided equipment to the sister mission EUCAP Nestor. The reasons for this high level of activity were believed to be the wish of the FHQ to achieve much during the deployment and the revised OPLAN, which called for a higher battle rhythm.[135] The fact that the tour was taking place during an inter-monsoon period with a lot of vessels in the area of operations also made it easier to carry out operations.[136] Furthermore, the FHQ had a relatively large number of ships at its disposal compared to some previous FHQs.[137]

The larger multinational FHQ possibly also meant that more countries could participate and gain valuable insight into operations, which could also ultimately benefit future collaborations.[138] There was broad approval for example for the fact that the FHQ included a Serb, a non-EU member state national.[139]

[128] Interview 7.
[129] Interviews 9, 17 and 18.
[130] Interview 36.
[131] Interviews 7 and 41.
[132] Interview 45.
[133] Interviews 4, 41, 42 and 44.
[134] Interview 4.
[135] Interviews 42 and 44.
[136] Interview 38.
[137] Interview 44.
[138] Interview 6.
[139] Interview 6.

The larger team meant that different units could be augmented, and that a new unit – N7, Joint Effects – could be set up to measure the effects of operations.[140] The fact that the FHQ would be reduced once again at the next rotation, however, meant that these changes would be rather short-lived. N7 was dissolved at the downsizing of the next FHQ, and N6, Communications, for example, shrank from five persons to three.[141]

Many agreed that the FHQ had run smoothly and that the Force Commander had been well prepared for his assignment.[142] A few reservations were expressed, however, about the FHQ possibly being too big.[143]

As is noted above, the Swedish-led FHQ had a notably shorter rotation. Operation Atalanta FHQs would normally lead the mission for four months. Due to the sailing schedule of HNLMS *Johan de Witt*, however, the Swedish FHQ was only in the area of operations for three months. Although the work of the FHQ had been appreciated and delivered much, it was noted that longer rotations were in general preferred to ensure continuity, not least because it takes time to develop routines and gain a full understanding of the context.[144] Moreover, shorter rotations might possibly introduce a sense of stress on delivery. On the other hand, it was possibly easier to keep the staff motivated for a shorter deployment.[145] The previous FHQ, which had been on a markedly longer rotation of six months, was seen as having been tired.[146]

To ensure a smooth transition between FHQs, the Chief of Staff as well as the ACOS for Planning (N5) and Intelligence (N2) rotated one month earlier than the rest of the FHQ. This facilitated the handover process and prevented a complete loss of knowledge when the next FHQ took over.[147] Interviewees thought this was a good system, and one suggested that it should be broadened to include some other key positions, such as the LEGAD.[148] Another proposal was for the handover process between FHQs to be extended to allow for a proper transfer of knowledge. At the same time, it was noted that continuity at the OHQ was possibly even more important, and that there was room for improvement in this respect.[149]

[140] N7 had previously been incorporated into N5.
[141] Interview 47.
[142] Interviews 7, 9, 36, 37, 41 and 45.
[143] Interviews 15 and 16.
[144] Interviews 38 and 51.
[145] Interview 36.
[146] Interview 9.
[147] Interviews 9 and 36.
[148] Interviews 38 and 46.
[149] Interview 5 and 46.

OHQ-FHQ Communications and Planning Processes

Relations and communication between the FHQ and the OHQ functioned very well, according to the interviewees.[150] Video Teleconferences (VTC) were held on a weekly basis between the OHQ Chief of Staff and the FHQ Deputy Commander, and various reporting mechanisms linked the FHQ with the OHQ, as well as the OHQ with EU institutions in Brussels.[151] The OHQ considered the FHQ to be professional and noted that information flows, e.g. on existing capabilities, were quick and precise.[152] It was noted that relations between the FHQ and OHQ were facilitated by the fact that the Operation Commander and Force Commander knew each other on a personal level, having recently studied together at the Royal College of Defence Studies at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom.[153] This had facilitated trust and communication between the two, according to interviewees. Another reason for the smooth relations was the contacts established and understanding gained during the JMP, when large parts of the FHQ had visited the OHQ prior to deployment.[154]

That said, the roles of and communication procedures between the OHQ and FHQ were to some degree still under development with regard to newly introduced decision-making processes. A so-called decision board process was largely introduced by the revised OPLAN and its new focus on secondary tasks. Although the decision board system had existed for some time, it had until now only been applied in extraordinary situations when there was a need for a greater degree of central, high-level control.[155] Hence, it was essentially new to both the OHQ and the FHQ.

The purpose of the decision board process was to ensure that all the required capabilities, e.g. force protection and medical capabilities as well as Rules of Engagement (ROE), were in place before an operation – primarily those linked to the new secondary support tasks – was launched. The decision board process is a three-week process that involves three meetings: an internal OHQ meeting where all branches examine possibilities and constraints; to be followed by two meetings (or possibly one) by VTC between the OHQ and FHQ, where the detail is discussed.[156] The OHQ sends a fragmentary order (FRAGO) to the FHQ, after which the FHQ produces a tactical plan to which the OHQ would then give a "go" or a "no-go".

[150] Interviews 4, 6, 9, 35, 37, 38, 40, 41, 45, and 46.
[151] Interview 41.
[152] Interviews 35 and 45.
[153] Interviews 4, 7, 37 and 41.
[154] Interview 45.
[155] Interview 15.
[156] Interview 35.

According to interviewees, it took a couple of decision board processes to iron out some creases in terms of developing a shared understanding of what should be addressed at the various stages of the process, how to communicate that information, and how to do it all at in a timely fashion.[157] The need was noted to speed up planning to accommodate tasks that may emerge at short notice or require quick action. All agreed that the decision-board process improved markedly with time and practice.

The Joint Effects branches of the FHQ and OHQ were involved in the process. Effects-based operations gained currency during the 1990–91 Gulf War, when the planning and conduct of operations aimed to generate specific effects, as opposed to traditional approaches of annihilation or attrition. The Operation Commander of Operation Atalanta, a British Royal Marine who joined the mission in August 2014, was particularly keen on the effects-based approach, which was subsequently emphasised in Operation Atalanta.[158] This led to a system in which joint effects were mainly dealt with at OHQ by the Operations branch (CJ3), which would define what effects should be achieved, while the planning branch (CJ5) set out how these effects were to be achieved.[159] In addition, there was a separate Joints Effects branch to ensure that the effects were coherent with activities and that desired effects drove activities and operations, not the other way around.[160]

At the FHQ, the newly created N7, Joints Effects, consisted of three people who focused on analysing tactical effects.[161] During the previous FHQ, this responsibility had largely been handled by N5, Planning, but the creation of N7 permitted a more concentrated focus on joint effects.[162]

In terms of lines of communication between the Joint Effects branches of the FHQ and OHQ, N7 would analyse the information collected from, for instance, friendly approaches and submit relevant information to Joint Effects at OHQ. OHQ, in turn, ahead of e.g. meetings with local leaders, would send so-called Lines to Take (LTT) to the FHQ, including relevant questions to pose, and sometimes briefing packs with useful background information. N7 at FHQ would then write a tasking order for the units.[163]

With operations now moving closer to the Somali coast, some highlighted the need for FHQ to ensure that it had appropriate expertise on Somalia, something it was seen to lack.[164] Along the same lines, it was believed that the addition of a

[157] Interviews 7, 9, 40, 41 and 45.
[158] Interviews 35, 40 and 45.
[159] Interviews 38 and 45.
[160] Interview 35.
[161] Interview 9.
[162] Interview 20.
[163] Interviews 20 and 35.
[164] Interview 9.

specialist on human intelligence (HUMINT) would benefit operations.[165] Such a function could be based at either the FHQ or, to ensure continuity, the OHQ, reinforcing the FHQ during specific operations.

4.1.3 Coordination with the Sister Missions

EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta is only one part of the EU's comprehensive approach to supporting stability in Somalia. Two other missions operate in the region under the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) – EUCAP Nestor and EUTM Somalia. These are interlinked in part and, thus, natural partners of Operation Atalanta. EUCAP Nestor arguably has more overlapping interests with Operation Atalanta and is also the sister mission with which Operation Atalanta collaborates the most. Both Operation Atalanta and EUCAP Nestor focus on maritime security. EUCAP Nestor provides assistance with strengthening maritime security agencies and maritime governance, including the rule of law and the judiciary. EUTM Somalia, for its part, contributes to the training of Somali soldiers.

Smooth coordination between the three CSDP missions is a stated aim, to ensure a fully comprehensive approach by the EU in the region.[166] While interviewees noted that specific activities had been successfully coordinated during the period of the Swedish-led FHQ, most thought there was room for improvement in terms of information sharing and strategic planning.[167] Coordination was viewed as rather ad hoc and lacking in structure. This, however, was not deemed to be specific to the Swedish-led FHQ, but rather the case for the mission in general. At the same time, relations with EUCAP Nestor – with which interaction was more frequent – were considered to be advancing, with an increasing mutual understanding of what the two missions could and could not do.

During the deployment in 2015, the mission supported EUCAP Nestor in two operations which were relatively complex with regard to planning and coordination. On 15 March, the *Johan de Witt* delivered two Nissan 4x4 vehicles to Mogadishu, two of the six vehicles EUCAP Nestor donated to the Somali Coastguard.[168] On 25 April, Operation Atalanta and EUCAP Nestor co-hosted a Key Leader Event on board the *Johan de Witt* off the coast of Berbera, Somaliland, with representatives of the Somaliland authorities, international

[165] Interview 40.
[166] See e.g. "Factsheet: The Activation of the EU Operations Centre", http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/documents/pdf/factsheet_opscentre_22_may_12_en.pdf.
[167] Interviews 4, 9, 15, 16, 20, 31, 37, 38, 40 and 41.
[168] European Union External Action, "European Union Missions Work Together to Support Somali Coast Guard and to Strengthen its Maritime Security Capabilities", 15 March 2015, http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eu-navfor-somalia/news/20150315_en.htm.

partners and NGOs to discuss the future of the Somaliland Coastguard.[169] In addition, on 4 March 2015, the *Johan de Witt* delivered four outboard motors to Bosaso Port Police in cooperation with EUCAP Nestor.[170]

Coordination was facilitated by Operation Atalanta's LNOs in the region, most notably an LNO based at EUCAP Nestor's HQ in Djibouti. The fact that the Atalanta Classified Mission Network (ACMN) IT system had been installed at EUCAP Nestor's HQ facilitated communication. Moreover, the fact that the CoS of the Operation Atalanta FHQ had earlier worked for EUCAP Nestor was also seen as having been beneficial to the collaboration.[171]

Coordination and cooperation with EUCAP Nestor, however, were believed to be held back by the fact that EUCAP Nestor was going through a period of strategic uncertainty as its future direction was under review. In addition, EUCAP Nestor's relatively limited capabilities, fewer personnel and resources, were thought to translate into an unequal relationship. It was also noted that EUCAP Nestor's focus on capacity building tended to require a different time perspective compared to Operation Atalanta, which often sought quicker results.[172] Moreover, Operation Atalanta – a military CSDP mission – and EUCAP Nestor – a civilian CSDP mission – are managed by separate structures in Brussels, something which was believed to hinder the development of a fully coherent joint strategy.[173]

Information sharing was identified as an area that would benefit from enhanced collaboration. Its activities on land in Somalia were thought to give EUCAP Nestor valuable insight into Somali society and actors.[174] By contrast, Operation Atalanta does not operate on land and its ships move around the region, only staying off sections of the coast for a limited period of time. The idea was raised of deploying a member of EUCAP Nestor with relevant expertise on board Operation Atalanta ships when conducting specific operations. It was noted that a EUCAP Nestor representative had successfully participated in an OHQ workshop, contributing valuable input.[175] Material produced by Combat Camera

[169] EUCAP Nestor Bi-Weekly Newsletter No. 07 & 08 2015, 19 May 2015, https://www.eucap-nestor.eu/data/file/1278/Bi-Weekly%20Newsletter%20No%2007%20&%2008%202015.hBsUHY6k6x.pdf.
[170] EUCAP Nestor Bi-Weekly Newsletter No. 04 2015, 16 March 2015, https://www.eucap-nestor.eu/data/file/1235/Bi-Weekly%20Newsletter%20No%20%2004%202015.yUw8U2ovXT.pdf.
[171] Interview 20.
[172] Interview 15.
[173] While the European Union Military Staff (EUMS) is in charge of the planning and operations of Operation Atalanta, the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) is responsible for the operational planning and conduct of civilian Missions such as EUCAP Nestor.
[174] Interviews 9, 16 and 40.
[175] Interview 40.

was used by both Operation Atalanta and EUCAP Nestor, including video of the handover of vehicles in Mogadishu.

4.2 The Integration of Enablers and Assets

As mentioned above, the integration of Dutch and Swedish assets and enablers into combined units was not a given before the initial planning of the operation and they were divided at the outset into two separate national organisations.[176] Eventually, the integration concerned three combined core elements: a boat unit, a helicopter detachment and an intelligence section. These are described separately below, followed by an analysis of the effects and synergies that these integrated units engendered.

4.2.1 The Landing Craft Control Team: A Combined Amphibious Unit

Dutch boat resources combined with Swedish combat boats constituted an amphibious unit called the Landing Craft Control Team (LCCT). The senior officer among the units, who in this case was Dutch, led the team, while the deputy team leader was the highest ranked Swedish officer.[177]

Organisationally, the LCCT was made up of one Dutch LCU, four FRISCs, a boarding team and two Swedish combat boats (CB90s). Tasking was done by the commanding officer of HNLMS *Johan de Witt* to the commander of the LCCT, who then in turn tasked either the Dutch or Swedish units, or both for combined efforts. Thus, there was no separate tasking of the units along national lines and the CO of the *Johan de Witt* only had one point of contact for all the boats. Operationally, however, the boat crews were separated nationally in the sense that Dutch personnel operated the LCU and the FRISCs and Swedish personnel operated the CB90s.[178] During the course of the mission, however, the CB90s had a Dutch signalist placed on board to operate the communication systems to ensure communication between the Dutch and Swedish boats and between the Swedish boats and the *Johan de Witt*. This was because the Dutch systems and related cryptos were NATO-based and the Swedish systems were not compatible with them. To enable Dutch and Swedish boats to communicate, two Dutch systems were installed on the CB90s: a command and control system for blue force tracking and a system for encrypted communication.[179] None of the interviewees saw this as causing any operational problems or having an impact on the execution of the team's tasks. It led to somewhat different procedures than

[176] Interviews 3 and 17.
[177] Interviews 17 and 29.
[178] Interviews 12 and 17.
[179] Interviews 1, 3, 12, 17 and 49.

usual, when communications between combat boats would normally go from one boat commander to another, as the information was sent through the signalist before being translated into Swedish.[180]

4.2.1.1 Tasks Performed

Apart from the relatively complex operations mentioned above, the LCCT primarily conducted patrols, reconnaissance and surveillance operations, and friendly approaches. Many of these activities were conducted from seaborne forward operating bases (FOBs), which was a new modus operandi for Operation Atalanta.[181] A FOB would be set up at sea at a predefined location within the area of operations, and patrols and surveillance missions would be conducted and intelligence collected by smaller units from this location. For the purpose of this operation, the Dutch LCU was used as a FOB from which the CB90s and the FRISCs could operate. A FOB can be operational for several days and enables the boats to fuel up and stay overnight without going back to the main operating base (the *Johan de Witt*). FOBs therefore have the distinct advantage of increasing the geographical reach of the boats and making it possible to concentrate intelligence collection on a specific area within the area of operations for an extended period.[182] The intelligence collected mainly consisted of information about activities in different areas along the Somali coast, including imagery, for example, of skiffs and dhows. Following FOB operations, the LCCT would be debriefed by the combined intelligence section on HNLMS *Johan de Witt*, to enable further analysis of the intelligence gathered (see section 4.2.3).[183]

The general view among the interviewees working in the LCCT was that they were prepared well, commensurate to performing the tasks assigned, and that in the grand scheme of things they were doing what they had expected to do.[184] One officer in the LCCT, however, pointed out that the exact nature of the tasks they were to perform was not entirely clear prior to the mission, partly due to the renewal of the OPLAN, and that the number of reconnaissance operations and friendly approaches ended up being considerably higher than expected.[185] The friendly approaches were usually carried out by Dutch personnel trained in HUMINT operations. In cases where the HUMINT team and its interpreter were not able to conduct friendly approaches, Swedish personnel did so in English.

[180] Interview 27.
[181] Swedish Armed Forces, 2015d “Den framskjutna grupperingsplatsen”, http://blogg.forsvarsmakten.se/operationatalanta/2015/04/16/den-framskjutna-grupperingsplatsen/ (accessed 15 June 2015).
[182] Swedish Armed Forces, 2015d.
[183] Interview 27.
[184] Interviews 12, 19 and 27.
[185] Interview 12.

This was not necessarily ideal since the Swedish personnel lacked training in performing HUMINT tasks.[186]

4.2.1.2 Effects and Synergies

Several interviewees highlighted the synergetic effects of integrating the Dutch and Swedish boat resources, some of which were of the utmost tactical importance. For example, since the FRISCs are constructed as open boats while the combat boats are closed and armoured, it was possible to use the CB90s as cover for the FRISCs during operations.[187] Similarly, strong benefits were gained from the combined use of the LCU and the CB90s, most notably for FOB operations, as mentioned above, with regard to the increased geographical reach of surveillance and reconnaissance operations that could be obtained.[188]

The CB90s performed exceptionally well during the mission, despite the fact that it was the first time the boats had been operational in the open ocean.[189] According to one officer at the OHQ, the boats were de facto force multipliers for the operation, enabling the conduct of focused operations while providing a high level of safety for the personnel.[190] An additional benefit of the CB90s was that they are equipped with air-conditioning, which allowed for longer FOB operations.[191]

However, as one of the Swedish interviewees working in the LCCT stressed, the combat boats would not have been able to operate in the area of operations as they did without HNLMS *Johan de Witt* as host platform. They would instead have had to regularly move into port to recuperate. With an LPD as the main operating base, it was possible to carry out any required maintenance and recovery at sea.[192] Taken together, the integration of the Dutch and Swedish amphibious resources enabled the *Johan de Witt* to carry out a number of tasks that would only have been partially possible with individual national contributions.

Interviewees also identified a number of key learning experiences from the integration of the boat units. According to a Dutch officer, the Dutch side learned a lot from the organisation and structure of the CB90 platoon, which were perceived as meticulous and well thought through, respectively. They also learned how to manoeuvre the CB90s and how to conduct operations using several boats.[193] According to a Swedish officer working in the LCCT, the

[186] Interview 12.
[187] Interviews 29 and 30.
[188] Interview 49.
[189] Interviews 3 and 38.
[190] Interview 38.
[191] Interview 33.
[192] Interview 12.
[193] Interview 19.

Swedish side learned a lot from operating on HNLMS *Johan de Witt* and from conducting FOB operations at sea. Sea operations are very different from operations in the Swedish archipelago, not least because the boats are moving at all times, and, adding to the experience, during FOB operations they were out for several days without going ashore. Consequently, the boat crews learned a lot about endurance in this kind of operational environment.[194]

According to several interviewees, previous cooperation and exercises between the Dutch and Swedish amphibious forces were a key factor in the successful integration of the boat resources.[195] Specifically, the fact that Swedish combat boats had previously exercised on the sister ship of the *Johan de Witt*, HNLMS *Rotterdam*, meant that a lot of practical details, such as docking procedures, were known beforehand and that some of the personnel already knew each other.[196] In addition, two CB90s were loaned to the British and Dutch navies in 2010, during which they were stationed on board HNLMS *Johan de Witt* for trials of lifting using small boat davits.[197] Hence, existing preconceptions of the *Johan de Witt* on the Swedish side, a ship which had hosted CB90s, as well as mutual knowledge of operational procedures and personal relations between crew members, particularly within the leadership, strongly contributed to the smooth integration. The fact that the combat boats had a self-sustaining logistical system of maintenance technicians further facilitated the integration.[198]

Nonetheless, a couple of areas of friction were raised by the interviewees. First, several Swedish interviewees perceived the Dutch operational planning process as problematic in the sense that it often lacked a clear and straightforward order briefs regarding what to do and how (see section 4.1).[199] On the boats side, this meant that orders and information requirements were sometimes perceived as vague or unclear, and that the units themselves had to acquire information and operationalise their tasks.[200] On the other hand, according to one Swedish interviewee working in the LCCT, this offered some freedom of action on how to operationalise and execute tasks.[201] Second, according to another interviewee working in the LCCT, the low level of integration – at the platoon level – led to some challenges with regard to technical and tactical procedures, primarily concerning operational procedures, where for example the Dutch and Swedish units had different views on required shooting distances and risk assessments for

[194] Interviews 12, 17 and 19.
[195] Interviews 12, 19, 27, 29, 33, 49 and 53.
[196] Interviews 19, 27, 29, 33, 49 and 50.
[197] Swedish Armed Forces, 2010, “Ett lyft för stridsbåten” http://www.forsvarsmakten.se/sv/aktuellt/2010/10/ett-lyft-for-stridsbaten/ (accessed 29 June 2015).
[198] Interview 19.
[199] Interviews 10, 11, 12, 23 and 27.
[200] Interviews 12 and 27.
[201] Interview 27.

avoiding blue-on-blue incidents.[202] This issue was reportedly identified during joint exercises but was never put to the test since the boats did not have to integrate at the unit level during a real operation. Third, according to a senior Dutch officer, the need to lodge both the LCU and the CB90s in the dock of *Johan de Witt* led to some operational limitations.[203] The LCU could not be used unless the CB90s were off the ship, while the CB90s could not operate in high seas, which the LCU could. Consequently, in cases where there was a lot of swell, it was not possible to deploy the CB90s but the LCU could not be used. According to the same interviewee, putting the combat boats on the side of the ship would have enabled separate use of the boats, but the *Johan de Witt* is not designed for this.[204]

4.2.2 The Helicopter Unit: Combined Air Assets

The combined helicopter unit consisted of two Swedish AW109 helicopters and one Dutch NH90 helicopter, bringing together two different helicopter systems. Like the LCCT, the helicopter detachment had a mixed Dutch-Swedish organisational structure with one senior officer in charge, also Dutch, who was responsible for tasking the entire unit.[205]

The integration of the helicopters was perceived as a logical consequence of the decision made on board HNLMS *Johan de Witt* to integrate the intelligence cells (see section 4.2.3).[206] Combining the air assets was natural as the intelligence section is closely connected to the helicopter detachment in airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions, which are a key task for Operation Atalanta, e.g. for tasking and imagery analysis.[207] Normally in international operations, the intelligence section is an integrated component of Swedish helicopter units rather than a separate function. In the standard Swedish structure there is a flight commander, a flight crew, a maintenance crew and an intelligence section.[208] This structure was, for instance, used in Afghanistan and was initially the planned organisational structure for the Swedish helicopter detachment of Operation Atalanta.[209] In the Dutch structure, on the other hand, an intelligence officer is normally included in the unit, but not an entire section. There is also a difference between military branches in the Netherlands, where, in the Dutch Navy, the intelligence side is usually incorporated into the

[202] Interviews 12 and 24.
[203] Interview 17.
[204] Interview 17.
[205] Interviews 17 and 29.
[206] Interview 24.
[207] Interview 24.
[208] Interview 24.
[209] Interview 24.

operations branch.[210] Consequently, the end result was a compromise structural integration, with a combined intelligence function separated from the helicopter unit and the operations branch,[211] but closely connected to them.[212]

The Swedish planning officer was part of the intelligence section at the start of the mission, but was later transferred to the helicopter detachment.[213] According to one senior Swedish officer, this proved very useful in the sense that the planning officer was responsible for managing the synchronisation between the helicopter unit and the other enablers and assets.[214] During the daily operations synchronisation meetings (opsync), representatives from the LCU, the combat boats, the Role 2 medical unit, the bridge deck on the *Johan de Witt* and the planning officer discussed activities in the coming two or three days, specifically focusing on forthcoming flight and boat operations. This synchronisation was of key importance since flight and boat operations placed different demands on the ship; for instance, docking the boats could put the ship in a position which was unsuitable for helicopter landings or take-offs.[215] Thus, these meetings were crucial for avoiding conflict between the enablers and ensuring that they were used optimally. By making the planning officer responsible for managing this synchronisation, the helicopter unit as a whole could focus all its efforts on performing its main duties.[216]

As with the LCCT, the flight crews were not integrated, and consequently flights, maintenance and technical issues were managed separately by the Dutch and Swedish personnel along national lines. The different flight crews had separate office facilities on the ship at the start of the operation. According to one Dutch interviewee, this might have been for operations security reasons.[217] As the integration progressed, however, the crews eventually came to share facilities. On the deck side, the crews worked closely together, and shared and borrowed tools and equipment from each other.[218]

The Swedish helicopters used during the operation were not maritime but designed for land-based operations. As a consequence, their rotor blades could not be folded (see section 3.2.3) and they lacked hoist capability and some maritime radar systems. In this case the helicopters also lacked secure speech

[210] Interview 21.
[211] For example, the PWO, who is involved in the conduct and direction of operations, was also Head of the intelligence section.
[212] Interview 24.
[213] Interviews 24 and 25.
[214] Interview 24.
[215] Interviews 21, 24 and 25.
[216] Interview 24.
[217] Interview 21.
[218] Interview 24.

capability.[219] None of the interviewees said this was a significantly limiting factor on their ability to preform the assigned tasks during the mission.

4.2.2.1 Tasks Performed

The fact that HNLMS *Johan de Witt* had two autonomous helicopter systems with different capabilities at its disposal enabled the mission to perform numerous tasks, some of them simultaneously. The main tasks that the helicopter unit carried out were intelligence, sea-surveillance and reconnaissance operations along the Somali coast.[220] The standard operational aim during the mission, according to two interviewees working closely with the unit, was to conduct flight operations twice a day, six days a week using both Dutch and Swedish helicopters.[221] To coordinate the activities, flight briefs were conducted ahead of each operation between the Principal Warfare Officer (PWO), the Aircraft Coordinator, who directs air-traffic, and the crews. Following operations, the crews were debriefed by the intelligence section in the same way as the LCCT. The Swedish crew was normally debriefed by Swedish intelligence personnel, unless personnel from the Dutch side happened to be present.[222]

4.2.2.2 Effects and Synergies

According to the interviewees, the main synergetic effect of integrating the Dutch and Swedish helicopters was the distinct advantage of having two autonomous systems complementing each other.[223] For example, the Dutch NH90 is more versatile and significantly bigger, and has a higher degree of protection and endurance than the Swedish AW109 helicopters (about four hours in the air compared to 1.5 hours), so it can operate further from the ship. The Swedish helicopters were able to cover areas closer to the ship. Because of the difference in size and endurance, the NH90 was better suited to transporting personnel, including for Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC), than the AW109s.[224] The Swedish helicopters, on the other hand, had a stronger ISR capability than the NH90, e.g. for high-definition photography, and were thus a key resource for conducting surveillance and reconnaissance tasks.[225]

The main de facto benefit of having two autonomous systems on board was that at least one of the helicopters was operational at all times. For example, the NH90 experienced some technical difficulties during the course of the mission and was grounded for considerable periods of time. If the Swedish helicopter

[219] Interviews 17 and 24.
[220] Swedish Armed Forces, 2015e “Ögonen från ovan” http://www.forsvarsmakten.se/sv/aktuellt/2015/04/ogonen-fran-ovan/ (accessed 24 June 2015).
[221] Interviews 21 and 25.
[222] Interview 25.
[223] Interviews 24, 30, 33, 43 and 50.
[224] Interviews 25, 33 and 43.
[225] Interviews 25, 26 and 33.

system had been of the same kind, they would also have been grounded and the *Johan de Witt* would have had to operate without any ISR capability for parts of the mission.[226]

The Swedish helicopters were perceived to have performed exceptionally well during the operation.[227] The lack of secure speech on board the helicopters did not lead to any significant operational limitations. However, one limitation was the conduct of ISR operations after dusk, since the system camera was not equipped with night vision. Consequently, the operators had to rely instead on thermal imaging, which has a lower resolution capability, for flight operations at night. This was particularly troublesome given the restrictions on the distance from the Somali coast that the Swedish helicopters were forced to adhere to due to national caveats.[228]

Based on the interviewees' responses, a crucial reason for the smooth integration of the helicopters was the fact that flight operations in the Netherlands and Sweden are conducted in a similar way. According to one interviewee, some procedures, such as the structure of flight briefs and debriefs, are very similar. Some of the equipment used on the helicopters is also identical, for example the survival radios (PRC).[229] Furthermore, the Netherlands and Sweden use the same maintenance system for helicopters, a system developed by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) which is compatible with the civilian flight system. In practice, this means that there is a standard for aircraft maintenance, in this case the B2-level, which both the Dutch and Swedish flight crews adhere to.[230] As a result, they used the same standards and regulations and could therefore easily share tools and other maintenance equipment between each other.

Since the idea at the start of the mission was to have separate helicopter units, this created a need for two officers, one Dutch and one Swedish, to lead the units. However, with the subsequent degree of integration, one interviewee noted that one officer in charge of the entire unit would have been enough.[231] It would also have been possible to downsize the helicopter unit as a whole, for example by having the ship provide the flight deck crew. The Dutch and Swedish sides both had their own crews, which could have been more efficiently structured.[232] Taken together, however, these were minor issues that did not affect the operational output of the unit in any way.

[226] Interviews 26, 30, 31, 39 and 43.
[227] Interviews 17 and 25.
[228] Interview 25.
[229] Interview 25.
[230] Interview 24.
[231] Interview 24.
[232] Interview 24.

4.2.3 The Maritime Intelligence Team: An Integrated Intelligence Section

The integrated intelligence section, the Maritime Intelligence Team (MINT), consisted of Dutch and Swedish intelligence personnel, including one Swedish imagery analyst. As noted above, the intelligence side was the first area for which integration was deemed necessary. According to one senior Swedish officer, this was because the Swedish intelligence unit did not have any of the equipment or access to the IT and communication systems used on HNLMS *Johan de Witt*. A lot of effort had been put into finding out which systems were to be used during the mission, but it was not until their arrival in Den Helder that the Swedish personnel acquired a full picture of the set-up on the ship. At this point they realised that it would be impossible to work separately because access to and the sharing of information between the Dutch and Swedish sides were essential to any operational output during the mission.[233] Since an intelligence structure already existed on board, the preferred solution was to use that structure and integrate the Swedish unit into it. This was only realised, however, around the time the *Johan de Witt* departed Den Helder on 24 January.

Organisationally, the Swedish intelligence unit was led and tasked by the Dutch senior officer, just like the helicopter detachment and the LCCT.[234] Compared to the enablers, however, the constitution of the intelligence integration was somewhat different. First, the deputy head of the unit was also Dutch, and not a Swedish officer as in the case of the enablers. Second, the Dutch and Swedish intelligence cells had separate office spaces and office facilities for national intelligence and security matters. Even though they shared a joint MINT office, e.g. for briefing purposes, the lion's share of the work was conducted in these separate areas.[235] Third, the Dutch personnel assigned to MINT had dual responsibilities and therefore had to carry out additional duties in their other positions.[236] None of the interviewees highlighted these differences as an obstacle to achieving the assigned tasks. Rather, the perception among both Dutch and Swedish personnel was that the intelligence integration had worked well.[237]

For the purposes of the operation, the Swedish intelligence personnel were given access to all relevant Dutch IT and communication systems on board HNLMS *Johan de Witt*, including parts of the NATO system.[238] To enable sharing of information and intelligence products between the cells, e.g. from the parts of the NATO system that the Swedish cell did not have access to, a co-shared system

[233] Interview 24.
[234] Interviews 24 and 26.
[235] Interviews 21, 24 and 26.
[236] Interview 29.
[237] Interviews 26 and 29.
[238] Interviews 21, 24 and 26.

was used.[239] According to an officer with considerable knowledge of MINT, more effort and attention should have been directed beforehand to putting in place a common network between the two MINT offices, for example a stand-alone system, to facilitate information sharing between the Dutch and Swedish cells.[240]

The decision to allow Swedish personnel to have access to and plug into existing networks and systems was not taken beforehand, but only once the mission was about to commence. This rather late decision making was not perceived as a problem by the interviewees, apart from the fact that because the matter was not sorted out in the planning phase, it required some extra work to get the necessary authorizations and clearances for the Swedish personnel.[241]

4.2.3.1 Tasks Performed

Given that the primary task of Operation Atalanta is to counter piracy off the Horn of Africa and in the Western Indian Ocean, intelligence naturally forms an integral part of the operation, to increase the understanding of piracy and its highly adaptable modus operandi. As the number of piracy attacks has gradually dropped, with the last known successful attack in May 2012, and the subsequent need for escorts at sea reduced, intelligence collection closer to the Somali shore has become increasingly important to Operation Atalanta in order to understand how piracy is evolving, adapting and regrouping.[242] Accordingly, the EUNAVFOR intelligence branches work to establish a baseline for the situation in different areas and, based on these, make assessments of how piracy is developing. The main task of the MINT was thus to support the FHQ and the CO of HNLMS *Johan de Witt* by providing related assessments and intelligence.[243]

As mentioned above, the primary tasks of the Dutch and Swedish enablers during the mission were ISR operations and FOB operations. The MINT, for its part, was instrumental in planning these operations and specifying the information that was to be collected. More specifically, the MINT would receive a task from the FHQ intelligence branch (N2), which it then operationalised into information requirements, images and maps. Depending on these, surveillance and reconnaissance operations were conducted by either the helicopter unit or the LCCT. According to one interviewee, however, the Swedish combat boats mainly relied on Dutch intelligence for their operations while the Swedish intelligence cell mainly supported the flight side.[244] After a completed operation the units were debriefed by the MINT and the information collected was

[239] Interview 21.
[240] Interview 21.
[241] Interview 21.
[242] Interviews 16, 26 and 40.
[243] Interviews 21 and 26.
[244] Interview 26.

analysed and put into different intelligence reports. In cases where the images taken during operations were deemed particularly interesting, a separate intelligence report, a so-called reconnaissance exploitation report, would be produced.[245] In the next step the reports were sent for approval to the Dutch officer in charge of the MINT and subsequently delivered to the FHQ as the *Johan de Witt*'s joint intelligence products.[246] The information collected also constituted the foundation for the planning of new surveillance and reconnaissance operations.

Initially, according to two Dutch interviewees, the debriefing system differed between the flight side and the boat side, in the sense that the same process was not used for both kinds of operations.[247] The process was first harmonised for the Swedish enablers and then later with the Dutch FRISCs. In practice, this meant that the debriefing session became standardised for all the enablers and, most importantly, ensured that information could be more easily and systematically shared between the units. For instance, the information collected during a flight operation was directly transferred to the LCCT, or the other way around if a boat operation had been conducted.[248]

At the start of the mission, the MINT held internal twice-daily meetings to coordinate the work of the team between its Dutch and Swedish parts. As the operation proceeded, however, these meetings were reduced to once a day.[249] In addition, as noted above, Intelligence Fusion Boards were held daily together with the FHQ, during which intelligence plans and upcoming operations were managed and coordinated.[250]

An interviewee who worked for the MINT noted that the Dutch and Swedish cells initially had different formats for their respective intelligence reports. Furthermore, the team initially had a huge output, producing 14 intelligence reports a day which was too many for the FHQ N2 branch to process. Consequently, the production process was tightened and the report format standardised to increase the coherence of the intelligence reports between the respective cells.[251]

Several interviewees pointed out that the limited number of interpreters on board put significant strains on the ability to collect intelligence during friendly approaches. There was only one Somali interpreter and one who spoke Arabic and Farsi, while several enablers often operated separately. This capability was

[245] Interviews 21 and 26.
[246] Interviews 24 and 26.
[247] Interviews 21 and 29.
[248] Interview 21.
[249] Interview 21.
[250] Interview 21.
[251] Interview 21.

therefore not adequate for the assigned tasks.[252] For example, on one occasion a FOB operation was conducted with the LCU and the combat boats, but the interpreter could not attend because of a conflicting local leader engagement which had higher priority. As a result, according to one interviewee working in the MINT, the FOB operation did not generate any intelligence of value.[253] A Dutch officer made a similar point, noting that with more interpreters the operational capacity could have been doubled, for example, by enabling a FRISC operation to be carried out in parallel with a FOB operation.[254] Thus, an additional capability of one to three interpreters would have increased the output of the *Johan de Witt*'s operations and, hence, the intelligence collected during the mission.

4.2.3.2 Effects and Synergies

According to several interviewees based on the ship, the integration of the intelligence aspects was of key importance to the ability of HNLMS *Johan de Witt* to produce the intelligence products it delivered during the mission, with regard to both quantity and quality.[255] The number of briefings from the intelligence side increased notably during the mission as the *Johan de Witt*'s operations gradually became more intelligence-driven regarding, for example, which operations to undertake and what to focus on.[256] This was a significant change compared to the start of the mission.[257] One key reason for this was the breadth of operational opportunities that the *Johan de Witt* offered as a platform from an intelligence perspective, such as the ability to conduct ISR operations in several directions at the same. According to two interviewees, this made it possible to obtain a full intelligence picture of the area of operations within weeks.[258]

The MINT on *Johan de Witt* was perceived to have performed well in comparison to other intelligence sections in Operation Atalanta. The performance of the imagery analyst capability was particularly valued, according to several interviewees.[259] At one point during the mission a letter of appreciation was sent from the OHQ to provide positive feedback on the analyst's performance.[260] The imagery analyst was a key resource for the operation because neither the Dutch contingent nor the FHQ possessed this capability.[261] There was an IMINT-

[252] Interviews 12, 16, 21, 26 and 29.
[253] Interview 26.
[254] Interview 21.
[255] Interviews 21, 24, 26 and 28.
[256] Interview 21.
[257] Interview 21.
[258] Interviews 16 and 21.
[259] Interviews 21, 24, 26 and 28.
[260] Interviews 21 and 26.
[261] Interviews 21 and 26.

section in the N2 branch, but not a designated analyst trained in imagery analysis.[262] The IMINT analyst was also a highly appreciated resource among the Dutch personnel on board.[263] According to one Dutch interviewee, training was held for Dutch personnel to enhance their understanding of and ability to use IMINT products, which was positively received.[264] Nonetheless, according to one FHQ and one OHQ staff officer, the MINT did not reach the level of the Spanish intelligence section, which was perceived to have delivered products of exceptional quality, inter alia, because of its strong HUMINT capability.[265]

According to one Swedish interviewee, a key reason for integration was for the Swedish intelligence personnel to be given access to and be allowed to work on the Dutch IT and communication systems on board the ship. Without access to these systems, including the NATO systems, they would not have been able to deliver the intelligence reports and imagery analyses, such as the After Action reports, that they did.[266] In addition, Dutch membership of NATO enabled the Swedish team to capitalise on intelligence from NATO sources, since this was incorporated by the Dutch into the *Johan de Witt*'s operational planning.[267]

Despite the overall smooth integration of the intelligence sections, one Dutch officer suggested a number of lessons that should be learned in preparation for any future endeavours of this kind: create standardised formats for the intelligence products, ensure that a process and a network for sharing information are in place and establish a process for debriefing that is the same for all enablers.[268]

One issue raised by a Swedish interviewee was the perceived scepticism at the start of the mission in the Dutch HUMINT team towards the Swedish intelligence cell, due to the fact that Sweden was not a member of NATO. This initial problem, however, was quickly resolved. The difficulty of sharing national intelligence with the Dutch was brought up by two Swedish interviewees. According to the interviewees, the Dutch disseminated a substantial amount of national intelligence to the Swedish side but this was not reciprocated. This led to some frustration in the Swedish team, since this kind of dissemination is based on mutual sharing, and intelligence was requested by the Dutch several times without the Swedish side being able to provide any.[269]

[262] Interview 16.
[263] Interviews 21 and 26.
[264] Interview 21.
[265] Interviews 28 and 40.
[266] Interview 26.
[267] Interview 3.
[268] Interview 21.
[269] Interviews 26 and 28.

4.3 Combining Personnel

Fundamentally, cooperation boils down to personal relations. There was an overwhelming consensus among interviewees that Swedish and Dutch personnel had worked together exceptionally well. Any points of friction had been few and far between, and resolved quickly. A key reason for this smooth cooperation was believed to be cultural similarities. Many noted that the Dutch and Swedes are alike in many ways, including a common solutions-based, pragmatic approach to tasks and a similar work ethos.[270] In addition, relations were thought to have been facilitated by the two countries having a similar sense of humour. Any minor cultural differences, e.g. regarding directness in communication or in preferences for planning, were quickly bridged as soon as they had been identified. The largely friction-free relationship held true on the ship as a whole as well as among integrated units on the ship and at the FHQ. Such views were expressed by those involved in planning the operation and those involved in the implementation phase. A Swedish interviewee even suggested that there might be larger cultural differences between the national military branches than between the navies of Sweden and the Netherlands.[271]

The fact that some of the Dutch and Swedish personnel had experience of working together elsewhere was judged to be a positive factor.[272] This was especially the case for the Swedish amphibious troops, as CB90s had taken part in exercises in 2010 with the *Johan de Witt*'s sister ship HNLMS *Rotterdam*. This meant that they already had some insight into the setting and working procedures of the ship. In addition, there was some mutual understanding of cultural characteristics among the Swedes and the Dutch. In some cases individuals had met before, which facilitated contacts at a personal level.

Furthermore, the obvious will of both sides to make the collaboration work was noted by many.[273] The Commanding Officer of HNLMS *Johan de Witt* underlined to all on board that the mission was a collaboration.[274] The Swedish approach from the start was that they were guests on board the ship, which may have made them more inclined to adapt to the new environment.[275]

English was the common language on board, and the fact that both the Dutch and the Swedes were judged to be fairly comfortable with and proficient at English was seen as helpful.[276] It was noted, however, that the Dutch tended to switch back to their own language on some occasions at moments of high stress, for

[270] Interviews 3, 7, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 23, 26, 28, 30, 41, 47, 48, 49 and 53.
[271] Interview 4.
[272] Interviews 23, 29, 33, 49 and 50.
[273] Interviews 3, 17, 19 and 48.
[274] Interview 3.
[275] Interviews 29 and 50.
[276] Interview 47.

example, making announcements over the ship's speaker system only in Dutch.[277] With time and some reminders, however, this seemed to improve and, at least those messages which concerned the whole ship were consequently announced in both English and Dutch. The fact that the CO of the ship underlined the fact that all messages should be made in both English and Dutch facilitated this change.[278]

When living together for months in the relatively confined space of a ship, living arrangements take on greater importance. One recurrent theme in interviews was the two countries' different eating habits.[279] While Swedish personnel were used to eating two cooked meals a day, the Dutch ship served a cooked meal for lunch and something lighter for dinner, most often involving sandwiches with a more substantial topping such as sausage. Some of the Swedes, especially those with physically demanding work, found this insufficient, and some even took to eating additional supplies, such as protein supplements, brought from home.[280]

HNLMS *Johan de Witt* is a large vessel able to accommodate both the Swedish units and the FHQ without any problems. The relatively large number of officers, however, meant that not all the international officers could stay in cabins on the ship's officers' deck. Some had to live with the crew on the lower decks. Staying on the crew's deck, in turn, meant different living arrangements, including for example having to participate in the common cleaning routines.[281] This reportedly caused some eyebrows to be raised, and some officers to protest, but the Swedish officers were said to have had adjusted well to the situation.[282]

The fact that the Dutch were used to having international guests on board was highlighted.[283] HNLMS *Johan de Witt* often hosts other militaries, and has for example had Canadian, Spanish and British military personnel on board. Typically, however, these forces would be on board for only a couple of weeks, but not the entire mission as was the case with the Swedish troops.

The interaction and cooperation between Dutch and the Swedes also resulted in synergies. On the human level, knowledge exchange was an obvious effect. Although the Dutch and Swedish forces had exercised together numerous times, working together over such an extended period and in theatre led to a more detailed and in-depth knowledge transfer. One example mentioned was that the Dutch forces were used to operating on the open sea while the Swedish had particular skills linked to operating in shallow waters, such as the archipelagic in

[277] Interviews 3 and 24.
[278] Interview 3.
[279] Interviews 13, 17, 20, 24, 27 and 28.
[280] Interview 23 and informal discussions with personnel on board HNLMS *Johan de Witt*.
[281] Interviews 24 and 41.
[282] Interviews 17 and 24.
[283] Interviews 17, 18, 19, 21, 50 and 51.

Sweden.[284] Dutch tactics with forward operating bases and different ways of approaching the maintenance of helicopters were also mentioned. Just learning that there are different ways of doing things was seen as valuable. Rotating parts of the Swedish contingent ensured that such knowledge transfer reached a larger number of personnel.

The ship had a Dutch chaplain on board, who provided spiritual support to Dutch crew members regardless of their religious affiliation. The role was not only to support personnel with issues connected to religion, but also to be a neutral person to whom anyone could turn in confidence if anything was weighing on their minds. There was no corresponding role among the Swedish crew. Instead, the head of the Swedish contingent tried to fulfil this function as best he could, lending an ear and offering support to Swedish personnel with any personal matters.

4.4 National Regulations and Procedures

Combining the personnel and assets of two separate countries inevitably means having to untangle, clarify and link national regulations and procedures. The resulting arrangements should preferably be comprehensive and seamless in order to facilitate the collaboration.

4.4.1 Diplomatic Clearances

One lesson learned from the collaboration between the Netherlands and Sweden relates to diplomacy. Before a military vessel can enter a country's territorial waters it normally needs clearance from that country's authorities. Typically, the embassy of the country of the ship in question will make the request for diplomatic clearance. In the case of HNLMS *Johan de Witt*, the fact that the ship was Dutch but with a Swedish-led contingent complicated this process.[285] Initially, the plan was for the Netherlands to apply on behalf of both Sweden and the Netherlands.[286] This proved unworkable, however, and instead the Swedish and Dutch Embassies both had to submit separate applications.[287] Consequently, it became key, but not always easy, to communicate to the receiving country that they were part of the same ship, sharing one platform.[288] According to one interviewee, delayed diplomatic clearance meant that the CB90s could not land in Djibouti as they did not have the required paperwork.[289]

[284] Interviews 12, 17 and 19.
[285] Interview 22.
[286] Interview 2.
[287] Interview 17.
[288] Interview 2.
[289] Interview 27.

Similarly, arranging diplomatic activities, including for example representation events, became a slightly more complex process. For an EUNAVFOR vessel, these would normally be organised through the national embassy. With a Dutch flagship under a Dutch CO, hosting an FHQ under a Swedish Force Commander, the procedure appears to have been somewhat less straightforward. At times, this meant that both the Swedish and the Dutch embassies, as well as the EU Delegation were involved. The larger number of parties involved automatically increased the complexity in terms of coordinating schedules and aims.[290]

Linked to this was the fact that any activities on Somali territory required Somali consent. Given the ongoing political developments and institution building in Somalia, it was important to ensure that the mission communicated with all the appropriate parties.

4.4.2 National Caveats

A defining factor in all multinational military collaborations is national caveats. National caveats place restrictions on what that country's forces can and cannot do. They are therefore often seen as a potentially inhibiting factor in multilateral operations, as they will decide the extent to which different militaries can cooperate. If a country prohibits its forces from night operations or in specific geographical areas, for example, this will naturally affect the extent to which those forces can operate with forces that do not have the same restrictions.

Before a country joins Operation Atalanta, it provides the OHQ with its national caveats and ROE. Similarly, the ships provide the OHQ on a daily basis with a list of planned activities for the next five days, including a list of potential restrictions and available resources.[291] National caveats are also checked during the Decision Board process to ensure that tasks are achievable. While national caveats must therefore always be taken into account, interviewees agreed that national caveats had not been a hindering factor in the collaboration between Dutch and Swedish forces.[292] One view was that the mandate of Operation Atalanta was so well defined that national caveats had less room for influence.[293] WFP, for example, was said to have asked Operation Atalanta whether it could provide protection for its vessels on the way to Yemen.[294] This task, however, was outside the mandate of Operation Atalanta and consequently would have required clearance from the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC). The issue of national caveats would only have come into play if the mandate had been amended. Some interviewees were of the view that the mandate placed

[290] Interviews 17 and 22.
[291] Interview 39.
[292] Interviews 18, 28, 29, 30, 33, 38, 41 and 46.
[293] Interviews 30 and 41.
[294] Interview 41.

significant constraints on the mission, possibly even to the extent of hampering truly effective collaboration with the land-locked sister mission EUCAP Nestor.[295] At the same time, however, it is worth noting that a move closer to Somalia's coastline would probably have increased the threat level and could have led to some countries' withdrawal or non-participation.

Another explanation mentioned for why national caveats had not become an issue on HNLMS *Johan de Witt* was that the head of the Swedish contingent was involved in planning and, as the holder of a red card, had the power to reject any proposed assignments. This meant that any potential obstacles were raised early on.[296] A technical agreement between the Netherlands and Sweden was produced one or two months before the operation, and any restrictions were more on what the assets could and could not do, e.g. the Swedish helicopters' operational range in relation to the coastline.[297]

However, a couple of interviewees noted that Sweden had at first submitted a relatively long list of caveats to the OHQ, which then had to be revised twice.[298]

4.4.3 National Tasking

A related matter of possible concern was the right to national tasking; that is, the right of each country to assign its forces elsewhere. It was unclear what would have happened if the Netherlands had decided to pull the *Johan de Witt* out of Operation Atalanta to perform other urgent tasks. Such a scenario was not completely implausible at the time, given the ongoing violence in Yemen which was capturing the world's attention. Indeed, the French patrol vessel *l'Adroit* was nationally retasked to assist in the evacuation of people from Yemen just after joining Operation Atalanta at the end of March.[299]

If the Netherlands had nationally retasked HNLMS *Johan de Witt*, Sweden would have had to take a political decision on the suitable course of action for the Swedish troops on board. It is possible that Sweden would have had an interest in joining such an undertaking, and perhaps it would have agreed to assist Dutch troops, but it would have been more problematic if Sweden did not want its forces to be associated with the new mission. However, it is likely that political consultations between the Netherlands and Sweden would have preceded any such situation. It was believed unlikely that the Netherlands would

[295] Interviews 31 and 40.
[296] Interview 29.
[297] Interviews 24, 30 and 46.
[298] Interviews 36 and 45.
[299] Dean Wingrin, "Some rest for l'Adroit during busy mission", *defenceWeb*, 12 May 2015; and *Bruxelles2*, "Une centaine de ressortissants évacués du Yémen par la Royale", 5 April 2015.

have made such a unilateral decision without first consulting Sweden, given the strengthened bilateral ties between Sweden and the Netherlands.[300]

More generally, there was some vagueness about under whose command the ship was when sailing to Djibouti, before joining Operation Atalanta. This was, however, resolved smoothly in talks. Training was undertaken as if the ship was already part of EUNAVFOR and, if any issues emerged, it was agreed that it would be addressed and dealt with.[301]

A related issue that emerged while sailing to the area of operations was that of force protection. Force protection is the measures taken to mitigate hostile action against personnel, facilities, equipment and operations. There was initially a level of vagueness about how the principle of force protection would apply to the shared platform. Were Swedish forces obliged to protect only themselves and their assets or also the Dutch ship as a whole? Would Dutch troops be required to protect the Swedish troops and assets? This question became all the more urgent in the light of the instability in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and the ship's transit through the Suez Canal. In the end, the Swedish contingent became part of the force protection but with special ROE.[302] The issue did not cause any problems, possibly because no incidents occurred, but should arguably have been foreseen and resolved at an earlier stage.

4.4.4 NATO Membership

Apart from the issues related to access to information (see section 4.5), the fact that Sweden is not a member of NATO was not seen to have had any significant consequences for the collaboration.[303] First and foremost, interviewees underlined the fact that this was the case because Operation Atalanta is an EU mission and not a NATO mission. Thus, the mission's mandate and operational set-up are based on the premise that participating states are EU – not NATO – member states. In addition, Sweden's close cooperation with NATO through the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme and contribution to NATO-led operations in the Balkans and Afghanistan have allowed Sweden to gain valuable insights into and experience of operating and participating in exercises with NATO members such as the Netherlands. Moreover, many areas such as terminology and operational planning have been adapted to NATO procedures and standards.

That said, it was noted that some NATO-related issues had arisen during operations. When HNLMS *Johan de Witt* passed through the Mediterranean Sea it reported to NATO as it – a ship of a NATO country – was transiting the

[300] Interview 3.
[301] Interview 17.
[302] Interview 3.
[303] Interviews 3, 6, 7, 18, 25, 29, 33, 36, 41, 45, 47, 50, 51, 52 and 53.

operational area of the NATO mission, Active Endeavour. As a NATO ship, it was thus required to provide Active Endeavour with associated support. Not being a NATO member, Sweden could not be a party to this. Concurrently, however, the Swedish helicopters were needed to exercise maritime surveillance. It thus became very important for the Swedish contingent to clearly separate and not mix up the two tracks – the associated support provided by the ship to NATO and the Swedish maritime surveillance exercise in the same area. This situation was resolved without any problems, but had not necessarily been anticipated.[304]

4.5 IT and Communications

In addition to the integration of personnel and enablers, IT and communication systems were a key part of the Dutch-Swedish joint effort, and are therefore elaborated in further detail below.

As mentioned above, the decision to give Swedish personnel access to and authorisation to plug into the Dutch systems on board HNLMS *Johan de Witt* was made quite late, just before the ship left Den Helder for the area of operations. The main reason for this, according to one Swedish interviewee involved in the process, was the lack of a situational understanding on the Swedish side of the actual conditions on board the ship.[305] Despite several pre-deployment visits and coordination meetings between the Swedish contingent, the Naval Department and Naval Tactical Command during the autumn of 2014, it turned out that the situation on the ground was not sufficiently known, for example, with regard to the number of computers available and how to access existing networks. The Swedish naval tactical-level commander's requirement specification stated that the contingent would rely on existing networks on board the *Johan de Witt*. While this was true for the FHQ, connecting the different systems became much more difficult for the rest of the contingent without enough computers available.[306] In this regard it was clear that the understanding of the situation on the ground did not match reality once the deployment started. Nonetheless, both sides were eager to resolve the issue, and they managed to do so by being pragmatic.

On the Swedish side, national bureaucracy was perceived as delaying and frustrating factors with regard to getting national systems and equipment on board the *Johan de Witt* operational. One issue, according to interviewees working with IT and communications, was the storage of crypto systems and the accreditation of technical systems. Since there was no technical security agreement in place between the Netherlands and Sweden, joint sharing of crypto

[304] Interview 3.
[305] Interview 8.
[306] Interview 8.

systems was not allowed. With such agreement, this would have been possible to arrange and it might have facilitated the handling of this kind of sensitive equipment.

All the mission-critical systems on board HNLMS *Johan de Witt* were Internet-based and the entire Dutch communication network was built on email and Microsoft Office software.[307] NATOSWAN was the most rolled out system on the ship but the ACMN was the standard network used for the operation. The ACMN provided the link to all the ships in the operation and a secure connection to the OHQ, and was the network through which the lion's share of the communication, information exchange and sharing of maritime pictures was made. The network is only suitable for information up to the level of confidential, and there is no EU Secret system on the *Johan de Witt*. This meant that all the information used in the operation had to be at most "Confidential", the second-lowest classification level. For the purposes of the operation, the Swedish enablers and the intelligence cell, as mentioned above, had access to ACMN as well as parts of NATOSWAN.[308]

According to several interviewees, the Dutch Internet-based system, which was quite new, was in a transitional phase and suffered from some initial teething problems. During the first part of the mission, this led to repeated problems with the working of the firewalls, servers and routers located in the Netherlands. This, in turn, led to long periods of downtime for the systems on board the *Johan de Witt*, during which communication with other Atalanta units and the OHQ was severely limited.[309] There was no reliable and fully operational back-up system that could be used to ensure communication during the repeated downtimes.

As noted above, the fact that Sweden is not a member of NATO was generally not perceived by interviewees to have had a significant impact on the integration or the operations. Some interviewees, however, noted that access to information was more limited, for example NATO Secret information, which to some extent affected their ability to perform their professional duties.[310] Other interviewees noted that having clearances for access to different systems and facilities in place beforehand would have facilitated the operation, and that information sharing between the MINT offices would have been easier.[311] Overall, however, it had not led to any substantial operational problems. One reason for this was that Operation Atalanta is an EU mission focused on counter-piracy, a fairly uncontroversial issue. Therefore, gaining access to systems and sharing information were less of a problem for this particular mission.[312] A second

[307] Interviews 13 and 21.
[308] Interviews 21 and 47
[309] Interviews 13, 21 and 28.
[310] Interview 15.
[311] Interviews 21 and 51.
[312] Interviews 31 and 41.

reason was that Operation Atalanta has its own mission network – ACMN– and that the NATO system was mainly used for liaison with other actors operating in the area as opposed to for operational purposes.[313] Hence, most of the information was already releasable to EUNAVFOR units. A third reason, according to one Swedish interviewee, was that Swedish forces were used to working closely with NATO member states. For instance, the Swedish military was a trusted partner in the NATO-led operation in Afghanistan, and had access to all relevant mission networks and systems despite not being a NATO member.[314] Finally, according one Dutch interviewee working at the politico-strategic level, the Netherlands was used to working with non-NATO countries and foreign personnel with different levels of screening and security clearance, which further defused the issue.[315]

At the FHQ-level, the Swedish personnel were allowed to use four of the six C2 systems. The two remaining systems were only available to NATO members.[316] As a result, every FHQ branch had a designated NATO officer responsible for converting operationally important information and uploading it on to the ACMN. This worked fairly well and reduced the level of information loss that the Swedish FHQ-personnel would otherwise have suffered. As the lead nation for the FHQ, this would have been severely problematic. The arrangement also worked significantly better in comparison with the previous lead nation experience of Sweden, when a US officer equipped with a NATO terminal sailed along with the Swedish FHQ flagship.[317]

[313] Interview 47.
[314] Interview 53.
[315] Interview 33.
[316] Interviews 13 and 15.
[317] Interview 13.

5 Lessons Learned

This study set out to learn lessons from the planning and execution of the military integration of Dutch and Swedish forces in EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta in 2015. This is the first time in the EU's history that such integration has been attempted for such an extended period of time during a military operation. This chapter summarises the main lessons learned from this unique collaboration.

Generally speaking, the integration was successful – to some extent surprisingly so. Some interviewees pointed out that the actual integration was an important result in itself and that one significant effect was the realisation among soldiers and officers, especially at the lower level, that this kind of cooperation could really work.[318] At the OHQ level in Northwood, no differences in the execution of tasks were noticed owing to the integration of Dutch and Swedish forces.[319]

The integrated partnership, and the breadth of enablers deployed with HNLMS *Johan de Witt*, enabled EUNAVFOR to carry out a multitude of tasks that could only have been carried out partially using individual national contributions, or perhaps not at all. The use of HNLMS *Johan de Witt* as the platform for operations was critical for several reasons. The ship is built to host additional capabilities. As one senior Dutch officer put it, it is like a toolbox that needs to be filled with tools, i.e. assets and enablers such as combat boats and helicopters, in order to operate.[320] Accordingly, for as long as an asset or enabler is on board, it is as integral a part of the ship as if it had always been so. For the Dutch, it was natural to apply the same philosophy to the Swedish enablers.[321] In addition, the *Johan de Witt* provided numerous critical functions that would normally require a substantial national support element, such as Role 2 medical facilities, maintenance facilities, and fuel, food, laundry and storage capacities.[322] The fact that these functions were available on the ship meant significantly lower demands on the Swedish contingent and the national logistical system. Sweden could also capitalise on the support lines in the area available to the Netherlands as a NATO member.[323]

Swedish interviewees highlighted the ability of the forces to carry out assigned tasks together with the Dutch, such as complex exercises, firepower training by both enablers and HNLMS *Johan de Witt*, simulated boardings and combined

[318] Interview 17.
[319] Interviews 35 and 42.
[320] Interview 17.
[321] Interview 17.
[322] Interviews 14 and 53.
[323] Interview 14.

operations.[324] At the same time, numerous lessons for the future were identified, such as how to operate Swedish helicopters abroad without a national support element ashore.[325] Working together in theatre over such an extended period resulted in solid knowledge exchange between Dutch and Swedish forces.

A combination of factors enabled the integration to run smoothly. The result might not have been the same if one or more had been absent. For example, with HNLMS *Johan de Witt* as the platform but without Dutch experience of hosting foreign nations on board, or without the will among both Dutch and Swedish personnel to make the integration work, the amount of friction would probably have been exponentially greater.

An initial phase of identifying and understanding the enablers' capabilities, procedures and compositions was required. In addition, neither side had a clear view initially on what the integration meant from an organisational perspective. These uncertainties only had a minor impact on the mission and primarily in the beginning, and were also quite natural given that this kind of integration had never been tried before. Even so, they were resolved quite late in the process, just as the mission was about to start, and could have been dealt with or clarified at an earlier stage.[326]

The main lessons learned from the integration of Dutch and Swedish forces are listed below.

Planning and Preparations

- The shared desire to make the collaboration work as well as a pragmatic approach to finding solutions played a significant role in making the cooperation successful. Moreover, the extensive experience of the Netherlands, from the strategic level to the tactical, of hosting foreign naval forces and operating with such forces on board was a factor in the success.
- That the Netherlands and Sweden had previous experience of Operation Atalanta and of commanding its FHQ facilitated the collaboration, as both countries were familiar with the requirements and other specifics relating to the mission. Moreover, the mission's relatively low threat level and battle rhythm put less pressure on planning and operations.
- The different planning cycles and political decision-making processes of the Netherlands and Sweden shortened the time available for essential joint planning and preparations. The value of establishing personal

[324] Interviews 3 and 4.
[325] Interviews 3 and 50.
[326] Interview 29.

contacts and smooth communication between counterparts at all levels was highlighted by interviewees. This proved to be key to ironing out any creases in the collaboration, most notably related to different timelines and structures for decision-making processes.

- Recce visits were highly beneficial for identifying potential issues and preparing the collaboration at the technical level. To ensure that such trips are fully profitable, it is important that they are well coordinated, and prepared in such a way that the right people meet and that the right questions are addressed. Although the visits in the case of the Dutch-Swedish collaboration were successful, there appears to have been some room for improvement in this area.
- The importance of integrated training to gain mutual insight into different procedures, routines, equipment and language should be underlined. In this case, the PDT was especially useful to ensure that such training could be carried out. Given that some Swedish personnel rotated during the tour, it proved invaluable that both rotations participated in the PDT.
- The tight sailing schedule of HNLMS *Johan de Witt* and bad weather decreased the time available for training and preparations. While it was possible to carry out most of the required activities during the PDT, this highlighted the fact that it is advisable to incorporate extra time into plans to allow for any unexpected problems.
- In the case of the Dutch-Swedish contribution, work on the SOPs had started in November 2014 but was not completely finalised during transit to the area of operations. This delay was not thought to have affected operations, but did prevent some higher-level training during the PDT. A lesson for the future is that SOPs should be prepared in time to allow for advanced joint PDT.
- It was indicated that the operational level was not consulted on planning documents until a late stage, at least with regard to the MoU. Involving the operational level at an early stage when producing planning documents is likely to increase the chances that all perspectives will be included.
- The relatively long transit period for the FHQ offered an opportunity for preparations and meant that all staff were fully prepared at the time of handover. While recognising the practicality of the FHQ sailing with the ship, these weeks were less useful for some functions and it is possible that they could perhaps have joined at a later stage, which would also have saved costs.

- The JMP was judged to have been extremely valuable in terms of establishing contacts between colleagues in the FHQ and the OHQ. The wide participation of the Swedish-led FHQ was correspondingly praised by OHQ representatives, who believed that it facilitated subsequent communication during operations.

Implementation Phase

Command & Control

- Joint operations were planned by the CO and the Executive Officer of HNLMS *Johan de Witt* together with the head of the Swedish contingent. This meant that the Swedish CO could early on signal whether there were any issues with using Swedish forces. This system, and the Swedish CO holding a red card, was assessed as having been successful.
- The fact that Swedish enablers were fully integrated with the Dutch ship was considered to have worked very well. That integration was not done as low as at unit level meant that issues connected to potentially different tactical and technical procedures, for example, did not arise. At the same time, integrating at a higher level, maintaining separate chains of command for national enablers, would have meant more distinct stovepipes, hindered efficient coordination and led to suboptimal outputs.
- The FHQ had a relatively shorter rotation of three months due to the availability of the *Johan de Witt*. While the FHQ managed to be highly productive during this time, a longer rotation would have been preferred in order to provide continuity and more time to follow through operations.

Integration of Enablers and Assets

- HNLMS *Johan de Witt* with its Dutch and Swedish enablers was a proportionate and well-adapted resource for carrying out the broad range of tasks that were part of Operation Atalanta, particularly with regard to operating closer to the Somali shore and supporting the EU sister missions.
- The similar military structures of the Netherlands and Sweden, apart from differences connected to the strong Dutch NCO system, facilitated the integration of the enablers.

Landing Craft Control Team

- Previous cooperation and exercises, particularly on the sister ship of the *Johan de Witt*, HNLMS *Rotterdam*, which hosted Swedish amphibious forces in 2010, were seen as having benefited the integration, as it meant that forces already had some insight into the work setting and working procedures and, in some cases, had already met each other.
- The FRISCs, combat boats and LCU were suitable enablers, allowing HNLMS *Johan de Witt* to conduct several tasks simultaneously. One of the main benefits of combining the enablers was the ability to conduct FOB operations close to the Somali shore, which allowed extensive intelligence gathering over longer periods of time.

Helicopter Unit

- The availability of two helicopters on board HNLMS *Johan de Witt* meant that the flagship always had one operating helicopter. Having two autonomous helicopter systems proved to be beneficial not only because they complemented each other in terms of their performance capabilities, but importantly also when the Dutch helicopter was grounded.
- The fact that the Netherlands and Sweden followed similar procedures and standards, e.g. for flight operations and maintenance systems, facilitated the integration of the helicopter units.

Maritime Intelligence Team

- A common network was critical for the sharing of information between the Dutch and Swedish intelligence cells.
- Access by Swedish personnel to the flagship's IT and communication systems was essential for the Swedish intelligence section to be able to deliver outputs for the operation.
- When national intelligence units are integrated in the way the Dutch and Swedish were, it is key to have joint standardised formats for intelligence products and for the debriefing of units after ISR operations.

IT and Communication

- The pragmatic approaches of the two countries, especially the Dutch host ship, resolved the issue of access to IT and communication systems. Better preparations and discussions on the details for combining and integrating systems would, however, have facilitated the integration.

Combining Personnel

- Cultural similarities were judged to have been a significant factor in the success. Many noted that Dutch people and Swedes are alike in many ways, sharing a solutions-based, pragmatic approach to tasks and a similar work ethos.
- When living together closely for several months in a relatively confined space, living arrangements take on a relatively important role. Different cultural customs, e.g. related to dietary habits, should be considered wherever possible. The fact that HNLMS *Johan de Witt* had often had foreign guests on board in the past was believed to have facilitated the integration.

National Regulations and Procedures

- The Netherlands and Sweden each had to submit separate applications for diplomatic clearances. This had not been anticipated and should be borne in mind for any similar future collaboration.
- Command structures and force protection roles during transit periods should be addressed and clarified prior to departure. Similarly, it is advisable for collaborating countries to determine procedures in advance for cases where the right to national tasking is activated.
- The fact that Sweden is not a member of NATO was not seen to have had any significant operational effects or posed any major problems for the integration, partly because it was an EU mission and Sweden is in any case used to working with NATO member states. It did, however, require numerous temporary solutions to ensure that the Swedish contingent had access to important information, e.g. installing radio systems on board the CB90s and obtaining clearances to access the NATO system. Special measures were also taken, such as the use of designated NATO officers in the FHQ to submit operationally important information to Swedish personnel.

Annex 1 Interviewees

Swedish Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces Headquarters

Desk Officer, Ministry of Defence

Head of Planning, Maritime Component Command

Planning Officer, Maritime Component Command

Operation Atalanta Desk, Maritime Component Command

Logistics officer, Maritime Component Command

Defence Staff

Naval Department

Operations Analyst, Air Component Command

Dutch Ministry of Defence and Naval base command

Senior Staff Officer for International Operations, Ministry of Defence

Senior Policy Adviser, Director of Policy, Ministry of Defence

Policy Adviser for the Northern Group, Ministry of Defence

Evaluation Department, Ministry of Defence

Planning Officer, Naval Command, Den Helder

Personnel on board HNLMS *Johan de Witt*

Combat Camera Specialist

Commanding officer of HNLMS *Johan de Witt*

Commanding Officer of the Swedish Contingent

Commanding Officer of the Swedish Helicopter Unit

Commanding Officer of the Swedish Amphibious Unit

Commanding Officer of the Swedish Combat boats

Executive Officer of HNLMS *Johan de Witt*

Gender Focal Point for the Swedish Contingent

Intelligence Officer, Maritime Intelligence Team

Imagery Analyst, Maritime Intelligence Team
Lessons-learned Officer for the Swedish contingent
Landing Craft Control Team Commander
Logistics Officer for the Swedish Contingent
Operations Officer, HNLMS *Johan de Witt*
Planning Officer, Combined Helicopter Unit
Principal Warfare Officer, HNLMS *Johan de Witt*
Head of Signal Security for the Swedish Contingent

EUNAVFOR Force Headquarters
Assistant Chief of Staff, Personnel and Administrative branch (N1)
Clerk, Logistics and Personnel branch (N4)
Chief of Staff
Deputy AssistanceAssistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence branch (N2)
Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, Operations branch (N3)
Force Commander
Legal Adviser
Planning Officer, Planning branch (N5)
Public Affairs Officer
Staff Officer, Intelligence branch (N2)
Staff Officer, Command and Control/Communication branch (N6)
Staff Officer, Training, Evaluation and Joint Effects branch (N7)

EUNAVFOR Operational Headquarters
Assistant Chief of Staff, Operations branch, short-term (CJ3)
Assistant Chief of Staff, Command and Control/Communication branch (CJ6)
Chief of Staff
Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, Logistics and Personnel branch (CJ14)
Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, Operations branch, mid-term (CJ35)

Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, Command and Control/Communication branch (CJ6)

Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, Joint Effects branch

Legal Advisers

Political Adviser

Public Affairs Liaison Officer

Spokesperson for EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta/Deputy Head of Public Affairs and Media Operations

Staff Officer, Intelligence branch (CJ2)

Staff Officer, Planning branch (CJ5)

Watchkeeper

Additional

EUNAVFOR Liaison Officer, the Seychelles

EUNAVFOR Liaison Officer, Djibouti

In 2015, the Netherlands and Sweden provided a joint contribution to the EU's counter-piracy military mission EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta. During their three-month deployment to the area of operation, Swedish troops and enablers – including two Combat Boat 90 assault craft and two AW109 helicopters – were stationed on board the Dutch warship HNLMS Johan de Witt, which also hosted the Force Headquarters (FHQ) led by a Swedish Admiral. This kind of cooperation, in particular having a tactical headquarters led by one nation and the flagship led by another, was quite unique.

In general, the integration was considered to have been successful – to some extent surprisingly so. This report describes and analyses the planning and execution of the fusion of Dutch and Swedish forces, identifying key lessons that may be of value in similar future collaborations. National regulations and procedures, command and control structures, preparatory training and exercises, the chosen level of integration and personal mindsets are among the issues discussed.

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