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Bernardino, Luís Manuel Brás
Rizzi, Kamilla Raquel

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THE OPERACIONALIZATION OF A HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FORCE IN THE CPLP: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEFENCE COOPERATION

Luís Manuel Brás Bernardino

Colonel at the Portuguese Army with the General Staff Course and the National Defence Course.
M.Sc. in Strategy and PhD in International Relations by the Lisbon University.
Professor at the Military University Institute (IUM) in Lisbon/Portugal
bernardino.lmb@ium.pt
ORCID: 0000-0002-3858-0261

Kamilla Raquel Rizzi

Associate Professor I at the Department of International Relations at the Federal University of PAMPA (UNIPAMPA), Campus Santana do Livramento/Brasil.
PhD in Political Science and M.Sc. in International Relations/UFRGS
kamillarizzi@unipampa.edu.br

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Resumo: O estudo procura identificar avanços na Cooperação em Defesa na CPLP, por meio da criação de uma Força de Assistência Humanitária (FAH). O problema de pesquisa versa em analisar-se quais os desafios e as oportunidades da criação de uma FAH na Comunidade. A hipótese direciona para que a cooperação em Defesa da CPLP, desde 1998, tem tido um desenvolvimento substantivo, pois consolida-se enquanto uma Arquitetura de Defesa dinâmica e comprometida entre os Estados-membros, cujas expertises em recursos humanos e equipamentos são as potenciais oportunidades.

Porém, o desafio é materializar esse envolvimento em resultados concretos que possam responder, primeiro, às necessidades de cada país e da CPLP, e segundo, dar maior vitalidade e operacionalidade à cooperação de Defesa em congruência com as orientações para uma cooperação estratégica na organização em linha com a Nova Visão Estratégica da CPLP.

Logo, compreende-se que a CPLP, ao propor uma FAH busca tornar-se uma organização com maior capacidade de reagir propositiva e positivamente a desastres nos Estados-Membros. Ainda, a gestão do risco importa para avaliar e analisar riscos, bem como planejar e executar ações específicas para prevenir e reduzir danos. A FAH é definida como uma unidade militar que desenvolve ações para a prestação de socorro de natureza diversa à população de um país atingido por catástrofes naturais ou resultantes de conflitos, respeitando o princípio da não-intervenção.

A partir do método hipotético-dedutivo, o estudo utiliza o protocolo qualitativo e quanto aos objetivos, o estudo caracteriza-se como descritivo-explicativo e utilizará os procedimentos de levantamento bibliográfico e documental (especialmente originados na CPLP) e aplicação de entrevistas com reconhecidos especialistas (principalmente de Portugal e Brasil).

Palavras-chave: CPLP; Cooperação de Defesa; Força de Assistência Humanitária

Abstract: The study seeks to identify advances in Defense Cooperation in the CPLP through the operationalization of a Humanitarian Assistance Force (HAF). The research problem aims to analyze the opportunities and challenges of creating a HAF in the Community. The hypothesis indicates that the CPLP's cooperation in Defense, since 1998, has had an extraordinary development, since it is consolidated as a dynamic and committed Defense Architecture among all Member States, whose expertise in human resources and equipment are the main potential opportunities.

However, the challenge lies in materializing this involvement into concrete results that can respond, first, to the needs of each country and the CPLP, and second, to give greater vitality and operability to the Defense cooperation in congruence with the guidelines for strategic cooperation in the organization and in line with CPLP's New Strategic Vision. Therefore, it is understood that the CPLP, by proposing a HAF, seeks to become an organization with more capacity to react purposefully and positively to face disasters in the Member States. Furthermore, risk management is important to assess and analyze risks, as well as plan and execute specific actions to prevent and reduce destruction. The HAF is defined as a military unit that develops actions for the provision of aid of varied nature to the population of a country affected by natural disasters or resulting from conflicts, respecting the principle of non-intervention.

Based on the hypothetico-deductive method, the study applies the qualitative research protocol. Regarding the objectives, the study is characterized as descriptive-explanatory and uses bibliographic and documentary surveys (specially originated in the CPLP) and the application of interviews with specialists (Portugal and Brazil).

Keywords: CPLP; Defence cooperation; Humanitarian assistance force.

“...following the principles adopted by bilateral and multilateral cooperation, “bimultilateral” cooperation will be a new form of strategic cooperation that the Community needs to affirm itself in this global world. Aspects highlighted in the new “CPLP Identity in the defense domain” that, being a document that focuses on “strategic transatlantic cooperation” within the Community and between the Community and other regional organizations, should contribute to the new “Strategic Vision of the CPLP”, can as well help to affirm each member State in the Community and the Community in each Member State...”

Lisbon, 26th September 2020¹

Introduction

One of the main objections that the CPLP has been subjected to in recent years, particularly in the Defense Cooperation scope, is its organizational misadjustment and especially the lack of an operational capacity to materialize the military cooperation of the past 25 years. These criticisms arise as a paradox of an imaginary that boosts the possibility of establishing and operationalizing a “Lusophone Military Force” to be employed in the Community area to safeguard its interests.

The constitution of a Military Force (or civil-military, integrating military and civil or dual-use means) centered on the perspective of humanitarian assistance and support to populations in a post-crisis or post-disaster scenario conceives, as a dual capac-

¹ https://caecplp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/A-new-strategic-vision-for-the-cooperation-in-Defence-on-CPLP_Ingles_Portugues_-26Sept20_CAE_CPLP.pdf.

ity, the possibility of connecting civil-military operations. On the other hand, the creation of a Military Force with operational capability (as a force of stabilization or reconstruction support), acting under CPLP's banner, in defense of its interests and in support of the Member States, depicts a significant step towards operational consolidation and contributes to its assertion in the context of regional insertion, converging into one of the Community's major aspirations, that is, affirming itself in the global system.

Under this logic, the potential establishment of a Lusophone Humanitarian Assistance Force (LHAF) may contribute to the operationalization and strengthening of CPLP's Armed Forces Action Mechanism for Mutual Cooperation in Disaster Situations (henceforth MRC), passed on Jun 1st, 2021, at the 20th Meeting of CPLP Defense Ministers. The MRC assembles complementary values of the countries in support of a useful and necessary initiative in light of the reality of shortage and inequality in order to become self-sufficient in a catastrophe situation.

From Brazil's perspective, for instance, collaboration in the creation, constitution, and operationalization of an LHAF for coordinated action in the core of the organization in humanitarian assistance in Portuguese-speaking territories, may represent an opportunity of strengthening internal and regional projection in the context of humanitarian aid. Moreover, it aims to cement its position as a contributing nation in terms of international humanitarian help and assistance, along with meeting the requirements of its National Defense Policy (NDP) and the National Defense Strategy (NDS) (previous versions of 2012, 2018, and in 2020 updated minutes) as a strategic objective.

On the other hand, to Portugal, the establishment of an LHAF reinforces its stance in the Community, widely through a greater engagement in Defense cooperation, which is a priority to its National Defense Policy (NDP) and lines up with the 2013 National Defense Strategic Concept (NDSC) (under revision). In addition, it provides an even greater dynamism to bilateral Defense cooperation programs and the involvement of defense industries in the Member States.

In contrast, to the other members, it will enable a reflection on the multiple systems involving civil protection and, particularly, humanitarian help (or assistance) in its territories, evoking further contemplation on the need for enhancements and/or the reinforcement of possible already-existing capacities. Conversely, to the Community, it represents a critical advancement in Defense cooperation (and beyond) and the possibility of projecting itself into the national and regional contexts, as well as granting more internal and external articulation with other areas affected by post-catastrophe humanitarian aid, especially in crisis or natural calamity scenarios, such as the ones concretely analyzed in this theoretical exercise.

This paper aims to verify the establishment and operationalization conditions of an LHAF as a means of participation and operationalization of the Mechanism, seeking to identify some of the possible contributions of the Armed Forces based on the existing challenges and possibilities. This refers to the possible constitution of a Military Force, which may be engaged, opportunistically, following the needs of each Member State and in the sense of strengthening Defense cooperation in circumstances of crisis and catastrophe among countries of the Lusophone Community.

Additionally, this research intends to arouse the debate over the constitution of an LHAF and contemplate on the way in which this Force might be established, what its mission is, and how/when (and under what conditions) it should be employed, with the purpose of perceiving the viability, capabilities, and main challenges that may influence the operacionalization of an LHAF, in the sense of contributing to the achievement of this aspiration.

Conceptual Framework

The research problem lies in analyzing the opportunities and challenges of an LHAF in the Community. The hypothesis leads to the comprehension that the Defense cooperation in the CPLP has been concretely developed through the Defense Architecture

among the Member States, the main challenge being materializing this involvement into substantial results that are able to respond, first, to the needs of each country and of the CPLP itself, and second, to provide greater vitality and operability, in accordance with the cooperation in the organization.

Based on the hypothetico-deductive method, the research employs the qualitative protocol, as it is concerned “...with deepening the comprehension of a social group, an organization etc. [...] Researchers who apply the qualitative methods seek to illustrate the reason for things...” (Gerhardt & Silveira, 2008, p. 32). Working with the hypothetico-deductive approach, the study is defined as descriptive-explanatory and will use bibliographic and documentary survey procedures.

While the deductive method leans toward confirming the hypothesis, the hypothetico-deductive approach pursues empirical evidence to refute it. When the hypothesis cannot be overturned, it is corroborated and, as defined by Karl Popper, “[...] the hypothesis proves to be valid, since it passed all tests, however, it is not definitively confirmed, as there may arise a fact that invalidates it at any moment...” (Gerhardt & Silveira, 2008, p. 27).

Conceptually, the research is based on the analysis of the United Nations report on disaster risk reduction by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2004), with the generic definition of the degree of risk (occurrence of a dangerous event) associating it to the number of deaths concerning the population exposed to this event, inferred as the probability of harmful consequences or loss of lives as a result of interactions between a natural hazard and the conjunctural vulnerability conditions in a given region or zone considered (UNDP, 2004, p. 98).

According to the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), natural disaster risk is defined as “[...] the combination of the probability of an event and its negative consequences. In the more technical sense, risk is characterized through a combination of three factors, threat, exposure, and vulnerability [...]” (UN, 2009a).

Other sources, coincidentally, address risk as the expected result of the combined sum between vulnerability and danger, which contributes to a possible measurement, simplifying the statistical and probabilistic treatment of these phenomena. In this context, vulnerability is summarily understood as the combination of multiple interdependent variables (demographic, economic, social, technical, or environmental), which turns a populational group less skilled or capable of absorbing the impact of a dangerous event, as well as recovering from it, or even contributing to the increase in its frequency (Braga, Oliveira & Givies, 2006, pp. 82-84).

According to data from the Centre of Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, natural hazards are classified into geophysical (earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions), meteorological (dangers arising from storms, extreme weather, and fogs), climatic (drought and natural fires), hydrological (floods, landslides, and wave actions), and biological (epidemics, insect infestations, and accidents with animals). Thus, risk can be perceived as the intersection of probability and possibility, considering external factors to its conceptualization, in which human interference increases or decreases its incidence, being considered a crucial aspect for its comprehension and analysis.

In turn, vulnerability is the condition determined by physical, social, economic, and environmental factors that increase the susceptibility of an individual, system, organization, or community to the impact of certain damages (UN, 2016, p. 24). Therefore, it is inferred that the structural analysis of a country (or organizations associating its Member States), not only because of its geographic conditions, but also because of social, economic, and infrastructural factors, determines the accentuation of its specific vulnerability.

In this sense, “[...] *resilience can be described as the range of measurements of persistence of a system and its ability to absorb changes and disturbances and still remain stable [...]*” (Holling, 1973, p. 14). Thus, a resilient organization develops several tools with diverse means, such as infrastructure, qualification, leadership, training,

and gathering experiences, that will be able to, synergically and complementary, aid its assessment and management of the dangers and vulnerabilities emerged from the most varied disasters (Tierney & Bruneau, 2007).

In this context, the CPLP, by developing a CRM along with the increment of an LHAF, aims to become an organization with greater capacity to positively react (preferably in advance) to events such as crises and natural disasters in the Member States, effectively becoming more resilient. Likewise, risk management corresponds to the evaluation and predicative analysis of risk, as well as the execution of specific strategies and actions to control, reduce, transfer, or mitigate the degree of risk. It is a widespread practice of several organizations to minimize risk both in investment decisions and in operational approaches, critical in warning and aid mechanisms in situations of natural catastrophe (UN, 2009b, p. 18).

Disaster risk management encompasses the planning, coordination, and execution of effective actions involving preventive measures that seek to reduce the risks of natural disasters and prevent the emergence of new risks (BRAZIL, 2017a). Therefore, risk management involves not only factors directly related to the risk itself, but also other accessory approaches that may contribute to the measurement of its management and the prevention of its occurrence. It is worth highlighting that underdevelopment and social vulnerabilities (among others) are fragile conditions that reinforce each other (Saito, 2008, p. 34).

Thus, a poorer country tends to be more vulnerable than a richer one, and this scarcity of means and resources amplifies its propensity to risk, that is, it gives it a greater degree of risk. This fragility to risk is understood as “[...] *the probability of suffering damage in a process of natural hazard. Therefore, [...] thus describes the structural characteristics and conditions of a community [...]*” (Gomes, 2016, p. 46). For this reason, the analysis of the Human Development Index (HDI) seems to be a reliable indicator that allows the evaluation of CPLP Member States to the prospect of an increase in the degree of risk and the consequent need for humanitarian aid, a subject this paper pays special attention to.

Paradoxically, a humanitarian crisis can be defined as a situation with a high level of human suffering, in which people's basic well-being is largely at risk. This crisis may be caused by natural disasters or generalized conflicts, commonly implying the involvement of means (internal and external) in support of the populations (Quintanilla, Hardman, Abud, Campbell & Ensor, 2014, p. 20).

Natural disasters can be presumed as the “[...] *result of the impact of an extreme or intense natural phenomenon on a given social system, causing severe damage and loss, and that exceeds the capability of those affected to live with such an impact [...]*”, often obliging the reinforcement of means and the involvement of multilateral agencies in support of the population (Saito, 2008, p. 4).

Moreover, humanitarian assistance is defined as the aid directed to populations affected by catastrophes or disasters, whose primary purpose is to save lives and diminish the distress of the affected population. It must be provided under the basic principles of humanity, impartiality, and neutrality; it can be direct, by directly distributing goods and services; indirect, through the transportation of these goods and later distribution in the country; or infrastructure support, which involves general road reconstruction and airspace management support with the purpose of mitigating damage from catastrophes.

Likewise, civil protection is associated with a set of preventive, relief, assistance, and reconstructive measures, aimed at averting or minimizing natural disasters and other calamities, preserving the population's morale and retrieving possible social normality. It can be handled as acts of passive defense, civil security, crisis management, and emergency services, noting that, in some countries, they are not fully organized, professionalized, and operational, consisting of volunteers and rudimentary systems run by the government, which may compromise the efficiency and promptitude of the response (BRAZIL, 2019a).

On the other hand, civil-military cooperation is inferred as a joint function that corresponds to crucial resources to support the achievement of mission objectives and allow military commands

to effectively engage in a broad spectrum of civil-military interaction with multiple non-military parts (NATO, 2018a, pp. 1-2). Civil-military coordination is, therefore, the dialogue and interface carried out between civil and military entities on the dimension and development of military operations, especially linked to, but not only, humanitarian assistance (Holshek & Coning, 2017, p. 13).

Thus, it is noted that one of the main characteristics a civil protection system must have is its capacity to adapt and respond to emergencies. This capability can be understood as the savviness of organizations, using its capacities and available sources, in managing adverse conditions, risks, and disasters aiming at contributing to the population's well-being. It requires continuous monitoring, access to reliable sources of information, and good management, either in times of normality, where the purpose is to predict and take precautions, or in periods of crisis, reinforcing risk reduction in its scope (UN, 2016, p. 12). Therefore, the creation of an LHAF can serve as a factor to strengthen this capacity in the core of CPLP, assisting the well-being of populations affected by a calamity and reinforcing the feeling of cooperation and interdependence among the Member States.

Paradoxically, a Humanitarian Assistance Force can be a joint and combined Force and can be defined as a military unit that develops actions for the urgent provision of relief of diverse nature to nationals of countries affected by the impacts of natural catastrophes, or resulting from war devastation, with the purpose of protecting, supporting, and offering welfare to victimized populations, always respecting the principles of non-intervention and non-interference.

The Armed Forces promote humanitarian operations alongside efforts made by States or other entities or organizations that seek to mitigate the damage caused by such natural disasters, bringing together certain capacities and developing a way of acting, properly trained and perfectly operational to ensure the necessary support anywhere and whenever needed. It is important to highlight that military capacity can be defined as a critical attribute necessary to a given structure, in order to successfully execute a military (or civil-

military) activity, guaranteeing effectiveness and freedom of movement to a determined Force (NATO, 2018b, p. F-2).

The susceptibility to the occurrence of natural disasters in the CPLP countries

The CPLP was created on July 17th, 1996, in Lisbon, and is currently formed by nine Member States (following the accession of Timor-Leste, on May 20, 2002, and Equatorial Guinea, on July 23, 2013). The Community holds an expressive geographic coverage as it is represented in four continents, and it is made up of over 350 million people who share Portuguese as its official language (CPLP, 2020a).

By covering four continents and being washed by three oceans, the Community carries different geographic, political, religious, and social characteristics, which require fruitful assessment and flexibility in dealing with complex issues within it, particularly the way these questions affect inter-State cooperation in situations of calamity/crisis/catastrophe and related to the provision of humanitarian assistance in a context of social emergency.

The CPLP countries are all coastal (some archipelagic) and mostly tropical. According to the Köppen-Geiger global climate classification, the majority of the Member States is classified as tropical, with a predominance of high temperatures and wide thermal variations, as well as a large volume of precipitation, which makes it more susceptible to global climate change. These aspects also characterize these States as more prone to climate changes emerging from the seas (oceans), such as cyclones and tropical storms, which have occurred in greater frequency in the Indian, Pacific, and South Atlantic oceans, as was the case of the cyclone "Idai" in 2019 in Mozambique (Eckstein, Hutfils & Winges, 2018).

In this context, it is relevant to highlight that, according to the 2020 Natural Disaster Risk World Report, in the degree of susceptibility to occurrences and the lack of response capacity, the organization has two countries (Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau)

among the fifteen most susceptible States to these events in the world. By expanding the perspective to the 50 first countries in this risk record, roughly 60% of CPLP's Member States are included in this cosmos, which can be considered a significant number in the probability of CPLP being affected by mega catastrophes. With that, a need to respond efficiently emerges, following the request for assistance by the impacted Member State, in post-catastrophe humanitarian aid (Gomes *et al.*, 2016, pp. 62-64).

Thus, nearly all Community members are subjected to catastrophic natural phenomena, sparking social crises and the disruption of humanitarian assistance systems. Therefore, the CPLP has conceived, in the context of Defense cooperation, a proposal for a Protocol of Response Actions to Community Disaster Situations (PARSC), which aims to address the limitations faced by the Member States and reflects the community needs in the effort of mitigating possible damage caused by catastrophic events.

Considering the aspects of each Member State, a comparative table was formulated between the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Climate Risk Index (CRI), seeking to determine which CPLP countries bear the highest degree of probability of needing post-catastrophe humanitarian assistance.

Table 1: Evaluation of Humanitarian Assistance Needs in the CPLP Countries

MEMBER-STATE	CLIMATE RISK INDEX (2020)	HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX (2020)	PREDICTABILITY OF THE NEED FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE	
Angola	80	148	+	
Brazil	91	84		
Cape Vert	135	126	+	
Guinea-Bissau	37	175	++	
Equatorial Guinea	-	145	++	a)
Mozambique	54	181	+++	
Portugal	72	38		

MEMBER-STATE	CLIMATE RISK INDEX (2020)	HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX (2020)	PREDICTABILITY OF THE NEED FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE	
São Tomé and Príncipe	-	135	++	a)
East Timor	-	141	+	a)

Source: formulated by the authors based on information from the Climate Risk Index (2020) and the Human Development Index (2020).

(a) Not available on the 2022 Climate Risk Index Report

The table identifies that Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, are the countries in the Community with the highest degree of probability of resorting, in the event of natural catastrophes, to international humanitarian aid, notably the CPLP Disaster Response Mechanism, which justifies the significance of such initiative and its possible implementation in short/medium term.

CPLP's Defense Cooperation and the CPLP Armed Forces Action Mechanism for Mutual Cooperation in Catastrophe Situations

The CPLP is characterized, as stated by Adriano Moreira (2000, p. 319), as a unique social group, identified in terms of common life, shared interests, cooperation, and interaction among its members for the accomplishment of common interests. In this context, the creation of operational mechanisms that bolster cooperation directly contributes to the deepening of strategic cooperation and works as a reinforcement of its identity.

In this regard, cooperation in the scope of Defense emerged in 1998 and was officially regulated in 2006, through the signing, in the city of Praia, of the Protocol for Cooperation in Defense (PCDD). The Protocol establishes the three specific objectives of the Community's Defense cooperation, such as a) the creation of a common knowledge-sharing platform in terms of military de-

fense, b) the promotion of a common cooperation policy in the Defense and Military spheres, and c) the contribution to the development of internal capacities aiming at strengthening the Armed Forces of the countries of the Community. In this case, both the creation of the MRC and the possibility of the constitution of an LHAF are encompassed by the objectives of Defense cooperation in the core of the Community.

After 1998, the so-called “CPLP Defense Architecture” was cemented². In line with the CPLP Defense Identity (2015) and the CPLP Strategic Cooperation Document (2020/2026), it was established, on one hand, the consolidation of the Defense organizational structure and, on the other, strategic guidelines for the reinforcement of Defense cooperation, with the possibility of creating an LHAF. In this context of consolidation and institutional growth in the scope of the operationalization of CPLP’s “New Strategic Vision” (NSV) (2016-2026), a dynamic and cooperative path was built.

The MRC’s main objective is the cooperation between the Member States for coordinated response actions in catastrophe situations. Therefore, the creation of this internal humanitarian assistance device, unprecedented in the world if one considers that these organizations come from countries with a common native language, contributes to the strengthening, consolidation, and concretion not only of the Defense aspect but of the organization itself, as well. This perspective corroborates the research hypothesis, as it confirms that the CPLP Defense cooperation has had an

² Currently organized in Head of State and Government Summits, Meeting of the National Defence Ministers (NDM), Meeting of the Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces (CSAF), Meeting of the National Defense Policy Directors (NDPD), Meeting of the Military Information Services Directors (MISD), the Center for Strategic Analysis (CSA), based in Maputo and the Permanent Secretariat for Defense Affairs (PSDA), based in Lisbon, among other organizations that emerge with specific assignments determined by Internal Regulations (CPLP, 2020). These are joined by other bodies that commit to the reinforcement of the Architecture, such as the FELINO Series Military Exercises, developed since 2000, the CPLP Navy Symposium, commenced in 2008, and the CPLP Defense College, launched in 2017, among others that contribute towards consolidating the Community’s Defense cooperation.

actual development, consolidated in the committed Defense Architecture among States in the sense of strategic cooperation.

The MRC establishes joint and party arrangements, focusing on the responsibilities of the Defense and General Staff Ministries, in the institution of a permanent communication channel for the coordination of aid and relief actions, conceiving the figure of the Coordinating Officer for Humanitarian Assistance (COHA) in the respective Staff, as points of contact. This configuration was presented by the Brazilian Ministry of Defense on May 25, 2021, at the 22nd CSA/CPLP Political-Diplomatic Seminar, and was approved on the following June 1st, as well as the elementary principles that conduct the MRC:

At the request of the affected country, in an emergency situation; Delivery of voluntary assistance; Coordination from the affected party in all cases; Military personnel complement civil activities; Neutrality, impartiality, and non-interference in domestic affairs; Civil, humanitarian, and time-limited activities (Sobrinho, 2021, p. 21).

The MRC defines that each country must promptly respond to the request for assistance, informing the capabilities and means to be made available to the PSDA. Next, it articulates with the Ministry of Defense of the Member State that requested help, in order to convey the final coordination between the available military and civil resources.

This humanitarian aid must be carried out under the principles of humanity, neutrality, and impartiality, regardless of ethnic race, religious belief, class, age, gender, or political opinion; it mustn't intervene in internal affairs of the affected country, nor meddle in activities unrelated to the disaster. Moreover, a minimum autonomy of seven days of operation (in case of the shipping of troops to the affected country) is envisioned, whilst the donor State must bear the costs of the support provided, including possible refurbishing (unless a specific agreement is made with the affected country); and considers the gender perspective in the action of troops, as well as the adequate treatment of vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, and people with special needs, in line with the standard norms and procedures in similar

forces at the service of the United Nations (PARSC, 2020).

In addition, it is established in the operationalization a system of coordination and alert, emphasizing in relation to the first aspect that “[...] *the coordination of actions will be enabled by the exploitation of resources available on the web, especially e-mail, as well as telephone and internet [...]*”, and, furthermore, that “[...] *the Chiefs of General Staff, in common agreement, will establish the necessary tools to implement the effective coordination and development of actions [...]*”. In the alert system³, it is stated that

[...] the Ministries of Defense of the State Members, through its respective General Staff, will adopt an alert system seeking to prepare for the use of military means [...] to be triggered by the action coordination system, which may be activated by any country that feels threatened or hit by an extreme natural phenomenon or subjected to the risk of a serious technological/anthropic accident [...] (PARSC, 2020, w/p).

The MRC establishes that the affected country, through the COHA, will send its request for assistance to the PSDA and the other countries, concurrently with the communication, via diplomatic channels, of the solicitation for international aid. The COHA of the requested nations will verify its availability of means and capacities, both in the scope of Defense, and regarding other relevant national organizations, seeking to fulfil the affected country's request, and simultaneously linking up with the diplomatic

³ The alert system comprises the following phases: Green Alert (when the country holds a high probability of being hit by an extreme natural phenomenon or being subjected to the risk of a serious technological/anthropic accident in the next 72 hours or less); Yellow Alert (when the country is hit by an extreme natural phenomenon or by a serious technological/anthropic accident, whose dimensions may exceed its response capacity); and Red Alert (when a country is hit by an extreme natural phenomenon or by a serious technological/anthropic accident that exceeds its response capacity, and it is predictable that it will request international emergency assistance).

instance for the necessary articulations to make the support viable. The Chiefs of General Staff may adopt additional measures by mutual agreement to simplify coordination and, via COHA, will forward to the PSDA a record of the means or capabilities to be jointly made available.

The operational concept points to the provision of means or capacities that will form a set of CPLP means and capacities, although it cannot be named a Force or even a Humanitarian Assistance Force, a part in which it is considered that the MRC needs to be effectively improved⁴.

Therefore, the consolidation of the participation of the military in this structural and seasonal Defense/Civil Protection system interacts with the capabilities of the Member States. This factor is relevant because some countries do not dispose of a cemented protection and civil defense policy in which their Armed Forces can participate more effectively, as seen above. Angola, Brazil, and Portugal, for having more experience, means, and more consistent legislation can act as a backbone to the other Member States, assembling critical capacities.

The way a Force to participate in humanitarian or peace missions is constituted is relevant. For this purpose, the main challenge effectively lies in establishing interoperability between the Armed Forces of the CPLP countries that have previously made themselves available to include certain capabilities in a seasonal or semipermanent Force. Concurrently, interoperability may be seen as necessary to the establishment of common mechanisms in the use of the Force. The MRC indicates that the "FELINO" Military Exercises will be the basis for training human resources and for operationalization.

It is necessary to establish forecast scenarios for each Member

⁴ The constitution of a HAF with capacities provided by the Member States, which would be necessarily associated with a doctrine of joint and integrated training, would optimize the employment of resources and grant a higher level of operability. This idea prevails from the notion that the capabilities of countries such as Brazil, Portugal, and Angola could embody as a key link of the capacities considered semipermanent and critical for use in situations of humanitarian crisis within the Community.

State likely to be affected, to raise the efficiency of responses to the catastrophes. These scenarios must be developed and the predictability of action improved through a prior survey of required capacities in case of humanitarian assistance, which results in quick responses and agile lifesaving (UNITED NATIONS DISASTER ASSESSMENT AND COORDINATION, 2018, pp. 14-15).

Regarding the creation of the PARSC, it is possible to infer that its establishment will depend on structural factors within the Community, but also on political will, structural factors (issues on funding, employment doctrine, operation training, and the command or direction of actions), which stand as the major challenges for the implementation of this Protocol in future time. The establishment of a COHA in the EMGFA of the Member States has the role of being the contact for the insertion of information in the PSDA, in incipient response actions. With a distinctive perspective, the COHA cannot be determined solely in cases of disasters or calamities, under penalty of not being fully familiarized with the issues of the Community. In addition, the Member States have particularities, as is the case of Brazil (and most countries), in which privileged contact with the international arena is not made through the Ministry of Defense, but rather through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which can provoke limitations in the development of the mechanism. In a broader outlook, the creation of a permanent monitoring structure for disaster situations in the CPLP seems necessary.

In this context, this initiative becomes unique in the international community, confirming the CPLP's vanguardism and dynamics in Defense cooperation and in the affirmation of solidarity among peoples.

The Lusophone Humanitarian Assistance Force

A Humanitarian Assistance Force can be defined as a temporary force (Task Force) established to execute a humanitarian aid operation, integrating, with the necessary means and under a coordinated command, the joint effort in the case of a disaster/

calamity/catastrophe. An LHAF, as the main instrument of the Response Protocol to Disaster Situations (2021), can present itself as a quick, useful, viable, and fruitful alternative in humanitarian actions on behalf of aiding the populations and corroborates the initial hypothesis of this research.

Coordinating these forces and identifying the way each nation can contribute is a major challenge for the CPLP. The establishment of an LHAF must consider, among other aspects, the creation of a database of capabilities and the continuous search for reasonable interoperability, so that the survey of possibilities of each Member State is explicit before participating in humanitarian operations. Furthermore, the research identifies modules (or capacities) provided by a determined Member State, pre-prepared with a core base to intervene, and other capacities (catalog type) that will be granted by augmentation according to the force requirements and predicted needs for the operation.

The creation of this Force would be relevant and consistent with the organization's purposes, since it reinforces the Member States' demands for actions within the scope of defense and security cooperation, ratifying the high level of interaction in this component. Thus, it is believed that the establishment of this Force, in addition to acting in humanitarian activities, may evolve in the medium/long term future into peacekeeping operations, fulfilling an aspiration of the Community, as stated in paragraph 2 of art. 4 of the CPLP PCDD (2006, p. 6). It is noted that there are some divergences in perceptions of which model can and should be employed, and the creation of the LHAF should be cemented so a catalog of capabilities of each Member State can be constituted⁵.

⁵ Regarding the capabilities, this qualification must direct towards the provision of humanitarian assistance, in addition to combining civil or civil-military organizations and agencies, with the Joint Center for Peace Operations in Brazil as a reference for a future "Center for Operational Training and Promptitude of Humanitarian Assistance Forces of the Lusophone Community." The force must have action mobility in the area of operations, quick projection (possibility of strategic transport), action flexibility, efficient C2 (command and control), and command unity. Additionally, it must provide capacity of evacuation of

It is also verified that a bi-multilateral perspective is essential in approaching the research problem. The Community must be aware of the direction each country has taken in its regional context of conjunctural insertion, as a critical factor to understand its position (and needs) within the CPLP framework and evaluate the regional frame of intervention, optimizing, in this process, its capacities as an organization.

Conclusion and Remarks

This paper analyzed the challenges and opportunities of establishing a HAF in the Community. The hypothesis indicated that Defense cooperation in the CPLP has developed through the creation of a dynamic and committed Defense architecture among the Member States. The concrete possibility of the existence of an LHAF, thus, subdues the challenge of materializing this involvement into actual results that can respond, first, to the needs of each country and the CPLP, and second, to provide greater vitality and operability in congruence with the cooperation in the organization, corroborating the proposed research hypothesis.

In sum, the constitution of this LHAF is desirable and possible in the short/medium term within the current CPLP Defense cooperation framework. However, other aspects must be widely discussed - not only in the scope of Defense, promoting a reflection in the Community's political-strategic and diplomatic fields, working even as a central element of a future Strategic Plan for Defense Cooperation. In this context, the CPLP's MRC stands as a necessary and current instrument, as long as it involves the operationalization of a Humanitarian Assistance Force in other areas of cooperation within and outside the Portuguese-speaking community.

It is noticeable that there are countries in the Community

victims, with search and rescue parties; restoration of communication lines; water treatment, as well as production and delivery of food; forest firefighting; emergency sheltering of evacuees; clearance and/or reconstruction of roads; transport and decontamination/disinfection.

among the most vulnerable in the world to natural catastrophes, holding a high degree of susceptibility to risk, which highlights the importance of creating a mechanism of this nature and typology, particularly the constitution of an LHAF. The continuity (possibly with an adaptation) of the “FELINO” Exercises is regarded as relevant as they are the best (but not the only) way to achieve the desired interoperability between the Armed Forces of the Lusophone nations.

In this context, it was inferred that part of the countries of the Community is susceptible to the risk of catastrophes, along with the poorly consolidated Defense/Civil Protection structure, causing uncertainties regarding the actual capacities to react to a large-scale catastrophe event. Therefore, it is considered important that Member States develop and improve their dynamics in humanitarian assistance actions, especially in the defense and civil protection of their territories, developing legislation and exploring doctrines, as it will have a positive impact on the strengthening of the existing stages of CPLP’s own MRC.

In conclusion, the LHAF must be developed from a core base and constitute a catalog of capacities for the Community’s Member States to use in the event of catastrophes. Its association with the alert states defined in the MRC is fundamental, which could accelerate the response, especially the initial one. Likewise, bi-multilateralism was judged crucial in this context, as there are countries that assume relevant positions in triggering this mechanism due to their national and international experiences, and, mainly, for the leadership and role model they can perform in this process.

At last, the operacionalization of the Force can be considered useful in supporting the MRC and may represent an important step towards the employment of a Lusophone Peace Force under the auspices of the UN. Defense cooperation enables such advancements, which would further strengthen the friendship and integration ties between the Portuguese-speaking countries and the Community relevance to the Member States and to the regional security contexts in which they are circumstantially inserted.

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