

Political Feasibility of Changing the NALMEB Program

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A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of wavy lines followed by a more complex, stylized flourish.

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Summary

The Deputy Commandant, Plans, Policies, and Operations (DC, PP&O) Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC) asked CNA to analyze the Norway Air-Landed Marine Expeditionary Brigade (NALMEB) prepositioning program. This report completes task 4, determining the political feasibility of changing the program and the degree to which the program can be modified.

We examined the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the U.S. and Norway, which governs the NALMEB program. The MOU, signed by officials of the U.S. Department of Defense and Norwegian Ministry of Defense, defines:

- The NALMEB's mission;
- The broad outlines of the equipment set;
- What support Norwegian forces provide for NALMEB missions inside Norway;
- The ways in which the MOU may be modified or the program terminated.

The MOU states that changes to its language must be approved by both sides. Termination may be effected by either side with one year's notice. From this study of the MOU, we developed four courses of action for further analysis:

- Course of action 1 involves changing the MOU's language to include missions other than the defense of Norway.
- Course of action 2 would change the MOU's language's concerning the equipment to be stored in Norway, paving the way for the equipment set to be modified for additional missions added under COA 1.

- Course of action 3 would change the MOU to allow selected Norwegian forces, earmarked to support NALMEB missions inside Norway, to deploy with U.S. forces on missions outside the country.
- Course of action 4 would terminate the program.

To determine the political feasibility of these changes, we identified and interviewed all stakeholders in the program, both U.S. and Norwegian. Our interviews focused on stakeholders' willingness to support the four COAs discussed above. We also examined stakeholders' past actions related to NALMEB and other U.S. prepositioning programs in Norway. This effort resulted in a number of case studies, which serve as a check on the data from our interviews.

Our research and analysis suggest that courses of action 1 and 2 would receive the support of all relevant stakeholders, and are thus politically feasible. Course of action 3 would not be supported by any of the Norwegian stakeholders, and, since it requires the agreement of the Norwegian side, is not politically feasible. Course of action 4 could be effected unilaterally, but, based on the expressed preferences and past actions of U.S. stakeholders, would be very difficult.

Introduction

Background

The future of U.S. presence in Europe has been under active discussion for over a decade, since the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War[1,2,3]. The NALMEB program, as one part of the U.S. presence in Europe, has been specifically examined in several studies. These include a Department of Defense Inspector General (DOD IG) report issued in 1995[4], a previous CNA “quick response” study completed in 1996[5], and a thesis written at the Naval Postgraduate School in 2000[6].

The Deputy Commandant, Plans, Policies, and Operations (DC, PP&O), Headquarters Marine Corps, asked CNA to examine the NALMEB program, with a special emphasis on its operational relevance, the political feasibility of changing the program, and potential future structure. This report completes task 4, analyzing the political feasibility of changing the program. CNA has also examined the kinds of missions for which NALMEB is most appropriate in [7].

A political feasibility analysis is necessary to determine whether the NALMEB program can change, or whether modifications will be blocked by stakeholders. It also determines the potential for changing the way NALMEB missions are conducted, for example by deploying Norwegian supporting forces outside Norway. We also attempt to gauge the political feasibility of ending the NALMEB program. Several observers, including the authors of [4], have recommended that the program be terminated. Others [5] have speculated about the costs of termination, but without conclusively determining which, if any of these costs would actually be incurred—as noted in [6]. Our analysis of the extent to which the program can change will allow us to validate or refute the assumptions we use in [7].

Methodology

As is true of much political and other social science research, our efforts to document the political feasibility of changing the NALMEB program face problems of reproducibility and traceability. We considered various options for conducting our research, and settled on a modified version of the PRINCE (Probe, Interact, Calculate, and Execute) methodology. This methodology is used to determine the likelihood that a given policy initiative will be successful. Since PRINCE analysis requires documenting the positions of key players, we gathered data by conducting interviews and case studies. These approaches dictate additional methodological considerations. We describe PRINCE, interview, and case study methodology in more detail below.

PRINCE Methodology

The PRINCE methodology was devised by political scientists as a tool to determine the likelihood that a proposed new policy or policy change will be successful.[8] We used a modified version of the PRINCE approach, because it is designed for use by a stakeholder, rather than an independent researcher, and because we found it, in some respects, too subjective for the task at hand.

In the Probe and Interact phases of PRINCE analysis, the user identifies all key stakeholders and their positions on the issue at hand. In addition, the analyst attempts to gauge the salience of the issue for each player. Salience is a measure of the importance of the issue for a given stakeholder. Thus, a stakeholder's position—positive or negative—may or may not be very strongly held. Salience thus determines the *degree* of support or opposition the stakeholder can be expected to provide. Finally, the researcher identifies each stakeholder's power relative to the issue at hand. A stakeholder may have strong views, but little power over the outcome relative to others.

In the Calculate phase of the analysis, the analyst ascribes numerical values to the views of each stakeholder using a scale of one to ten. A similar value assignment is made for each stakeholder's power

relative to the issue. These values are then totaled and the likelihood of policy change is measured from the resulting numbers.

In the final phase, Execution, the user chooses one of several strategies to get the policy in question adopted. The selection of strategy is based on the numbers determined in the calculate phase.

We did not use the Calculate or Execute portions of PRINCE analysis. The Calculate phase assigns numerical values to findings that we see as inherently non-quantitative. This may be useful for a stakeholder conducting a “back of the envelope” evaluation, prior to choosing a strategy to effect implementation. For our task, we believe it more useful to provide a qualitative description of stakeholders’ views. In virtually all cases, these views are sufficiently clear that the fate of a proposed change can be determined without attempting to quantify them.

We also did not use the Execute portion of PRINCE analysis. This is due in part to its heavy reliance on the numerical results obtained in the Calculate phase. In addition, it is not our task to implement policy but to suggest the likelihood that various policy changes will be adopted.

Interviews

Although we do not attempt to quantify our results in the manner suggested by the PRINCE model, we did control the data we gathered by interviewing stakeholders carefully, and by attempting to corroborate the results of our interviews with historical case studies.

Interviews are a challenging and imperfect way to gather data. In the worst case, interviewees may not respond truthfully. More frequently, they may be influenced by the manner, or even the order, in which questions are asked. Responses may also be influenced by a belief that the interviewer prefers one answer over another. Finally, the setting, including attendees, may influence interviewees’ responses.

In all our interviews, we stated that we were neutral researchers, whose goal was not to recommend specific policies but to determine the positions of all concerned. We worded our questions in a neutral

manner so as to avoid appearing to favor a particular response. Some of the questions were open-ended; others provided checks on previous responses. In interviews with Norwegian stakeholders, we raised the most sensitive issue, terminating the NALMEB program, last. Doing so at the beginning of the interview may have put respondents “on guard,” or suspicious that our questions represented “feelers” from the USMC to determine the possibility of ending the program. A complete list of the stakeholders and other personnel we met with and interviewed is found in Annex A.

We were not able to control for every factor that can influence responses. In nearly all cases, we interviewed stakeholders in their workplaces, during the work day, and with colleagues present. This may have resulted in a residual feeling that the responses given were “on the record” and had to reflect official policy. To offset these risks and as a check on the results of the interviews, we also conducted several case studies.

Case studies

Case studies can be useful for corroborating findings and strengthening predictions. We gathered information from several previous cases of proposed or actual reductions to pre-positioning programs in Norway. The cases include the events that followed the 1995 release of the Department of Defense Inspector General (DOD IG) report recommending that the NALMEB program be terminated.

Overview

The remainder of this paper is divided into four sections. The first describes the key provisions of the U.S.–Norway MOU, which establishes and governs the NALMEB program. This examination leads us to identify four courses of action, which we analyze in the remainder of the paper:

1. Changing the MOU’s description of the NALMEB’s mission,
2. Changing the NALMEB equipment mix,

3. Adding language to provide for Norwegian support forces to accompany U.S. forces on deployments outside Norway, and
4. Terminating the MOU.

Sections two and three detail our research on the positions of Norwegian and U.S. stakeholders, respectively. These sections describe the results of our interviews and case studies. The final section offers conclusions about the political feasibility of the four courses of action identified in section two.

The MOU: Essential Features

The NALMEB program's founding document is a U.S.-Norway bilateral "Memorandum of Understanding Governing Prestockage and Reinforcement of Norway." The MOU, dated January 16, 1981, was signed for the U.S. by the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy and for Norway by an official of the Ministry of Defense (MOD). This section briefly highlights some of its most salient features.

The MOU's expressed purpose is to "strengthen the security of the NATO area through enhanced Alliance capability reinforcing Norway." To that end, it states that the U.S. "may provide... a U.S. Marine Amphibious Brigade (MAB) for Alliance reinforcement of Norway within the NATO chain of command."

The MOU specifies some of the capabilities of the MAB (now referred to as a Marine Expeditionary Brigade, or MEB). These include two close air support squadrons, two air defense squadrons, support aircraft, approximately 75 heavy transport and light support helicopters, and infantry and anti-tank weapons.

In a few cases, the MOU lists exact or approximate quantities of equipment to be prepositioned in Norway. These include 24 155 millimeter howitzers and approximately 250 trucks with about 100 trailers. Also included, although in unspecified quantities, are ammunition, fuel, and food.

The MOU also describes the support that the Government of Norway (GON) provides the NALMEB. Most significantly, the GON is required to furnish "adequate means to... transport personnel and equipment of the [MEB] from Central Norway to other threatened areas in Norway." Specifically mentioned host nation support includes:

- 150 over-snow vehicles,
- Two motor transport companies of 90 trucks each,
- An ambulance company with 35 ambulances, and
- A refueler section with six trucks.

Norway also provides security and general maintenance for the prepositioned equipment and supplies, and the prepositioning facilities themselves.

Amendments to the MOU are possible by mutual agreement of the two governments. It has no set termination date. The MOU entered into force upon signature and will remain so indefinitely, until terminated with one year's notice by either party.

Options for Change

The foregoing discussion describes how the MOU identifies, in general terms, the NALMEB's mission, materiel, support to be furnished by Norway, and procedures for amendment and termination. These features provide the basis for our analysis. Using them as points of departure, we examined the political feasibility of mission, material, and Norwegian-provided support, and of terminating it altogether.

We examined four potential courses of action, not all of which are mutually exclusive. The first involves the NALMEB's mission. As noted above, this is specified in the MOU as "reinforcement of Norway within the NATO chain of command." We wanted to ascertain the political feasibility of either changing this mission statement or adding other missions. At first glance, such changes would seem to be feasible, because NALMEB equipment and supplies (E/S) have already been used for at least one mission outside of Norway. We wanted to determine, however, how Norway might wish any language regarding additional missions to be phrased, and whether the description of the original mission would be removed, modified, or left intact.

Second, we wanted to determine the political feasibility of changing the prepositioned equipment mix. This equipment mix was

developed specifically for operations in central or northern Norway, where mobility is limited. As a result, the force is light—it has no tanks, light armored vehicles (LAVs), or amphibious assault vehicles (AAVs). This option has two main sub-categories:

5. Adding more logistics-related items, such as combat service support (CSS) equipment, and
6. Adding more weapons systems, such as the tanks, LAVs, and AAVs mentioned above, or additional artillery pieces.

Third, we wanted to determine whether Norway would be willing to deploy supporting forces for “out of Norway” (OON) missions. Norway has created two units—the Host Nation Support Battalion and Brigade 12—to support NALMEB forces deploying inside the country, for the mission envisioned by the MOU. The Host Nation Support Battalion assists in withdrawing equipment from the caves and transporting NALMEB forces. It also includes the truck and ambulance companies mentioned above. Brigade 12 provides rear area security for NALMEB forces. Many of the functions of the HNS battalion and Brigade 12 would also be useful in OON deployments. Accordingly, we attempted to ascertain the feasibility of modifying the MOU to permit these units to accompany U.S. forces on such deployments.

Finally, we attempted to determine the political feasibility of terminating the MOU. Unlike changes to the MOU, which require the agreement of both sides, termination can be effected unilaterally. Thus it appears that Norway could not prevent the U.S. from terminating the agreement if it so desired. Nonetheless, we attempted to determine what actions Norway might take in response to termination, in order to determine the political and financial costs the U.S. might incur, and the probable reactions of U.S. stakeholders, if such action were attempted. We also assessed the likelihood of U.S. stakeholders agreeing to termination.

Norwegian Stakeholders

Norwegian Foreign Policy and Defense Establishments

Norway's foreign policy and defense establishments are generally similar to those of the United States. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has the lead for all foreign policy issues, as does the Department of State in the United States. Although they are not named by function, the Ministry includes major divisions responsible for:

- Trade, Globalization, and Energy,
- Security, to include NATO, Europe, Russia, North America, and terrorism, and
- Multilateral issues, including the UN, Middle East and Palestine, Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief.

The principal stakeholders for the NALMEB program are in the security division. Although NALMEB is, formally, a DOD-MOD program, it has been characterized as a cornerstone of the U.S.-Norwegian security relationship. As such, it is an important issue for MFA. We therefore included MFA as a stakeholder and interviewed MFA officials.

It is also appropriate to consider MFA views given the involvement of MFA's American counterparts in issues concerning U.S. prepositioning programs in Norway. The American Embassy in Oslo, as discussed below, has not hesitated to become involved in important decisions concerning these programs. The embassy typically characterizes them as important foreign policy issues despite the fact that they are "owned" by DOD or the services.

As Norway's signatory agency for the MOU, the Ministry of Defense would determine Norway position regarding changes to its language.

The MOD staff is analogous to that of the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense, representing the civilian leadership of the defense establishment. It is divided into four major departments—General Services, Security Policy, Planning and Economic Affairs, and Defense Resources. The chief stakeholders for the NALMEB program are within the Department of Security Policy.

Besides the civilian MOD staff, the Ministry of Defense also includes the military staff of the Chief of Defense (CHOD), who is similar to the United States' Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. CHOD is Norway's senior military official and military advisor to the Minister of Defense. Although not the Norwegian signatory of the MOU, CHOD would advise the MOD staff on any operational issues arising from proposed changes.

Pending a reorganization and combination with the MOD staff, expected in August 2003, the CHOD staff has three major sections, responsible for Operations, Plans and Policy, and Analysis and Audit. The chief stakeholders in the NALMEB program at CHOD are in the Operations and Plans sections.

Interviews

In our interviews, we focused on the political feasibility of the four potential changes discussed above:

1. Changing the MOU's description of the NALMEB's mission,
2. Changing the mix of equipment and supplies;
3. Adding language that would permit deploying the Norwegian support forces (notably the HNS Battalion and Brigade 12) with USMC units using NALMEB E/S outside Norway;
4. Terminating the MOU and ending the program.

With one exception, we discussed each of these options in interviews at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense, and Chief of Defense (CHOD). The first three would require mutual agreement between the U.S. and Norway. The fourth, termination, may be effected unilaterally, but we attempted to determine what

responses Norway might make, in order to better gauge the costs of termination for U.S. stakeholders.

We conducted two interviews at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The first was with the Director General of the Department for Security Policy and Bilateral Relations with the U.S.A. and Canada, and Russian and the CIS countries, his deputy for Bilateral Relations with the U.S.A. and Canada, and the Deputy Director General for Global Security and Nuclear Safety. A second interview was conducted with the Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry's third-ranking official.

At the Ministry of Defense, we interviewed the Under Secretary for Plans and Policies and members of his staff. We also had a preliminary discussion with the Under Secretary at a meeting of the U.S.–Norwegian Bilateral Study Group. At CHOD, we interviewed the deputy director for operations and selected members of his staff.

Changing or Adding to NALMEB Missions and Equipment Mix

We asked all three Norwegian stakeholders how they would react to a proposal to change or add to the MOU's statement of NALMEB missions. Depending on the response, we followed up with a question asking whether stakeholders preferred the MOU to describe the new missions in specific or general terms, and whether they preferred the language about the Cold War mission to be retained or deleted.

The Norwegian stakeholders were unanimously willing to change the MOU's language describing the NALMEB's mission. In particular:

- MFA stakeholders prefer that language describing the existing mission be retained. They also prefer that any language describing new missions be general rather than specific.
- MOD stakeholders feel that change is necessary, and that new missions should be described in such a way as to make the NALMEB E/S more useful to the U.S.
- CHOD stakeholders believe that revising the mission language is acceptable, but that the existing mission to reinforce Norway should be retained.

Our next question concerned willingness to change the NALMEB equipment mix. The possibility of making such changes follows logically from a change or addition to the NALMEB's stated mission. We expected to find that the Norwegian stakeholders' views on this issue resembled their views regarding changes to the mission.

After an initial, open-ended question about changes to the equipment mix, we asked two more specific questions about equipment types. The first was whether adding or substituting weapons systems would be acceptable. This question was asked because Norway is often depicted as being concerned with Russia's views. We wanted to determine whether such concerns might prompt Norway to limit or forbid changes in this direction.

The second question asked whether the stakeholder would support adding or substituting equipment other than weapons, such as logistics-related items. This question was asked because the NALMEB's Combat Service Support Element (CSSE) is small, since the MOU obligates Norway to provide selected CSS functions in the defense of the country. The question also served as a check on the respondents' answer to the previous question about changing the mission. The ability to fulfill the original mission is more dramatically reduced if there is a reduction in the number of weapons systems.

- MFA stakeholders are willing to see the mix of equipment changed. Given that anti-terrorism operations have become a top priority, changes to make the equipment mix more suitable for such missions are most acceptable.
- MOD stakeholders also showed little concern about equipment changes. They noted that major changes or additions to the equipment mix might increase operations and maintenance costs. Were that the case, MOD might wish to revisit the division of operations and maintenance costs. When pressed to describe the limits of their willingness to support equipment changes, MOD officials asked only that some of the equipment be appropriate for use in Norway. MOD is equally open to increasing the equipment mix's logistics-related equipment or its weapons systems.

- CHOD officials would urge that the NALMEB equipment mix remain relevant to the reinforcement of Norway, and support the original intent of the MOU. They would not object to adding additional equipment, and, more specifically, would support adding weapons systems as long as relevant treaty limits were respected.

Deploying Norwegian Supporting Forces Outside Norway

The Norwegian forces earmarked to support NALMEB in deployments inside Norway provide CSS and rear area defense. This arrangement allowed the original NALMEB equipment set and forces to be somewhat smaller than would otherwise have been required. In deployments outside Norway, however, such personnel and equipment would have to be transported from elsewhere—most likely the United States.

Norway has also been a frequent contributor to what Norwegians term “international operations.” Accordingly, we asked Norwegian stakeholders whether Norway might be willing to deploy the HNS Battalion and Brigade 12 with U.S. forces using NALMEB equipment on missions outside Norway. If so, we asked whether they would be willing to insert language regarding the possibility of such deployments in a revised MOU.

This kind of change to the MOU is less certain of success than the two discussed above. Norwegian stakeholders pointed out that both the HNS Battalion and Brigade 12 are conscript forces, not obligated by the terms of their conscription to serve outside the country. Norwegian service members who do deploy for international operations typically do so after accumulating some time in service, volunteering for overseas duty, signing contracts, and receiving specialized training. A decision to send conscript forces outside the country would be a national one. Even after taking such a decision, Norway would require time to prepare the forces for deployment.

To the above general description, MOD and CHOD stakeholders added some particulars.

- MOD stakeholders were similarly unsure that U.S. and Norwegian deployments would be linked. They noted that Brigade 12 is not very deployable. The HNS Battalion's support would likely be limited to one of its traditional missions—supporting equipment withdrawal from the caves—which could be accomplished without deploying.
- CHOD stakeholders pointed to FIST-H (a Norwegian acronym), as the unit most likely to deploy outside Norway. FIST-H is a specially designed combined arms unit that Norway has earmarked for international operations. CHOD believes that FIST-H represents a substantial contribution to international operations relative to Norway's small population. CHOD believes that deploying additional forces would strain its resources.

From the foregoing, it does not appear that the Norwegian side will agree to add language to the MOU that raises the possibility of deploying Brigade 12 or the HNS Battalion outside Norway.

Terminating the MOU and NALMEB Program

As we noted earlier, the language of the MOU provides that either side can terminate the arrangement unilaterally, with one year's notice. Thus, the concurrence of Norwegian stakeholders would not be necessary if the U.S. decided to do so. Prior studies on this subject, however, have suggested that termination is impossible for many reasons, including the importance of the U.S.-Norwegian economic relationship. To better understand the various costs of termination, we asked each Norwegian stakeholder about what his/her organization might do in response to termination.

As stated above, this question was always asked last in order to avoid coloring responses to our other questions. We also asked it carefully, noting that we were not interested in advocating termination, but were attempting to do additional research in an area that has been studied by others. We believe that the responses we received were as frank as possible, given the sensitivity of the issue and other limitations noted earlier.

- MFA officials noted that, while the response from most of the Norwegian political spectrum would be very negative, the consequences would probably be confined to the political realm. In response to a specific follow-up question, they stated that they saw no reason why there would be any effect on the economic relationship between the two countries. Even in the political sphere, MFA stakeholders saw the Norwegian reaction essentially limited to professing disappointment, rather than attempting retaliation.
- We did not ask about MOU termination at MOD.
- We asked CHOD what reactions or adjustments might be required if the MOU were terminated. There is little CHOD could do to avoid or retaliate for such an eventuality, but CHOD officials might urge that Norway reduce or eliminate its contributions to international operations. CHOD would also encourage MOD to develop substitutes for the NALMEB program through new bilateral or multilateral defense agreements. These might be with
 - The other Nordic countries, except traditionally neutral Sweden. Finland would be of particular interest if it joins NATO, as some Norwegians believe it may attempt to do in the next several years;
 - Other NATO countries, particularly as the United Kingdom and Poland;
 - The U.S. Army.

Case Study: Renegotiation of NALMEB Burden Sharing Arrangements

The interviews described above suggest that Norwegian stakeholders are open to renegotiating the NALMEB mission statement and equipment mix, and resistant to terminating the program. These findings are supported by a case study. In early 1995, the Department of Defense Inspector General (DOD IG) completed an audit of the NALMEB program and recommended that it be terminated, as its

mission no longer existed. The DOD IG further assessed that termination would save the USMC at least \$9.2 million per year, as Norway was providing only about \$1.2 million of the \$10.4 million annual budget.

The DOD IG report prompted the U.S. Ambassador to Norway and Norwegian Minister of Defense to begin discussions regarding Norway's share of NALMEB costs. The Minister ultimately offered to increase Norway's share of these costs up to \$10 million per year. At about the same time, the Office of the Secretary of Defense determined that it would retain NALMEB for the near term, against the recommendation of the DOD IG, contingent upon Norwegian consideration of increased burden sharing.

The Norwegian military delegation to the May 1995 NALMEB Geo-Prepositioning Conference offered to increase Norway's contribution to 50% of the total cost of storage and maintenance of NALMEB E/S. This figure excluded costs related to use of the equipment during exercises. As such, the Norwegian definition of burden sharing differed from the one used by the United States, which defined O&M costs as including these costs plus exercise strategic lift, ground and aviation ammunition, and aviation support equipment. In effect, the Norwegian definition served to decrease the amount Norway was offering, from the \$10 million initially mentioned by the Defense Minister to approximately \$5 million.

This disagreement over definitions served to protract the negotiations. A second round was held in late May, and included representatives of the Norwegian Ministry of Defense and Chief of Defense, and the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense and Headquarters Marine Corps. The American delegation again attempted to negotiate for Norway to provide the \$10 million per year offered by the Minister of Defense. The Norwegian side refused to change its position, and the American side accepted the Norwegian proposal after determining that negotiations were stalled[9, 10, 11].

The new burden sharing agreement was formally announced in June 1995 during meetings in Washington between the Norwegian Minister of Defense and U.S. Secretary of Defense[10]. In August, US EUCOM and Defense Command Norway signed a Prepositioning

Arrangement in Oslo stipulating that Norway would pay 50% of the annual O&M costs of the NALMEB program and all costs related to domestic transportation and other items. This brought the Norwegian contribution to NALMEB to \$6.1 million per year.

Two further changes were made to the Prepositioning Agreement more recently, resulting in Norway's assuming additional costs. The original agreement omitted aviation support equipment, and did not make allowance for annual inflation adjustments. As a result, Norway's share of NALMEB's budget remained at a constant \$6.1 million dollars per year despite rising costs.

The Amended Prepositioning Agreement, negotiated in 2000, rectified both oversights by explicitly including aviation support equipment and increasing the Norwegian contribution to a cap of \$8.6 million dollars, with an allowance for annual inflation adjustment. The Amended Prepositioning Agreement awaits final authorization and signature from EUCOM and Norway. Although authorization and signature are still pending, the NALMEB Executive Committee (EXCOM) approved the arrangement and implemented it for FY 2003.

This case study reinforces our interview findings, which suggested that Norway is willing to adapt the NALMEB program. When the DOD IG report argued that the program's costs were excessive relative to its utility, and raised the possibility that the program would be terminated, Norway was willing to decrease the costs to the United States by assuming more of them. Changes to the stated mission and equipment mix also increase the utility of the program to the U.S., and therefore the likelihood that it will be retained. Although different in scope, such changes are similar in magnitude to the changes made to the burden sharing agreement.

U.S. Stakeholders

As noted above, the MOU was signed for the U.S. by the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy. The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) is thus the signatory agency for the MOU, and would have to approve and lead negotiations for any proposed change.

Given that the MOU was not signed by the Department of State, DOS does not have any formal authority to comment on or prevent changes to, or even termination of it. DOS has, however, referred to NALMEB and other repositioning programs in Norway as foreign policy issues in the past. DOS may view some changes, and certainly any move to terminate the program, as affecting the larger bilateral relationship. Accordingly, we gathered the views of three organizations within DOS that deal with Norway: the Norway desk within the European Division; the European Regional Political-Military affairs office, and the Ambassador and embassy staff at the American Embassy in Oslo. In addition, we use several case studies to suggest how at least one stakeholder, the Embassy, might react to reductions or proposals to terminate the program.

Although Headquarters Marine Corps is also a stakeholder, we did not interview personnel there, since it was HQMC that asked us to examine the political feasibility of changing the program. It is worth noting that if HQMC proposed changes to the MOU's language, it might be asked to comment on any Norwegian response rejecting or modifying its proposals.

Office of the Secretary of Defense

The Office of the Secretary of Defense, as the signatory agency to the MOU for United States, would be the lead agency to either negotiate changes or inform Norway of the U.S.' intent to terminate the NALMEB program. As such, OSD must approve any proposed changes to the MOU or any initiative to terminate.

We discussed the NALMEB program with several officials in the Policy section of OSD. We also attended a meeting of the U.S.–Norway Bilateral Study Group, headed on the U.S. side by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (ASD (ISA)). From these discussions, we determined that:

- The Secretary of Defense and OSD value the defense relationship with Norway and are sensitive to Norway’s security concerns.
- OSD is presently studying all of DOD’s prepositioning programs.
- OSD is prioritizing rapid response capabilities, which it believes are necessary in the emerging security environment.

As with the State Department, OSD’s views of proposed changes to the MOU would depend heavily on Norway’s perceptions. Given Norway’s willingness, OSD appears open to changing the mission and, particularly, the equipment set. Given Norway’s reluctance, OSD would not attempt to introduce language regarding deployment of Norwegian supporting forces outside Norway. OSD’s view would in any case be irrelevant if Norway is unwilling to make such a change, since changes to the MOU must be agreed by both sides.

A proposal to terminate the NALMEB program, as discussed further below, would bring heavy pressure on OSD from the American Embassy and Norway’s Ministry of Defense. Regardless of how it responded to this, OSD would probably consider:

- The costs of
 - Reduced Norwegian defense cooperation, especially losing Norwegian contributions to international operations.
 - Substitute programs for maintaining military-to-military contacts with Norway.
- Whether, instead of termination, the program could be modified in such a way as to provide more responsive capabilities.
- Whether, if the program were terminated, the equipment and supplies could be prepositioned, at the same or lesser cost,

anywhere where they could be withdrawn and employed more rapidly. The same question might be asked about returning the equipment to the United States.

- Whether the savings realized from termination (possibly decremented by the assessed value of Norwegian contributions to international operations and the cost of replacement military to military contacts) could be applied against OSD priority programs and missions.

Unless it could be shown that termination would produce improvements in capabilities that outweighed its assessed costs, OSD would be unlikely to go forward with such action.

OSD's actions following the 1995 release of the DOD Inspector General's report suggest a similar conclusion. On that occasion, OSD was willing to reject the DOD IG's recommendation because Norway was willing to make changes to its effective cost to the U.S. If Norway is willing to allow new changes that make the program more useful in operations outside Norway, OSD will likely prefer such additional changes to termination.

Department of State

There are at least three entities within the Department of State that have some responsibility for policy toward Norway. Two of these are in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR), headed by the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Asian Affairs. The Bureau includes a Norway and Denmark desk (EUR-ND) and a European Regional Political-Military affairs department (EUR-RPM). The third entity is the American Embassy in Norway. We interviewed personnel from all three entities about the NALMEB program.

EUR-ND

EUR-ND manages day to day interactions with Norway across a variety of issues. EUR-ND finds Norway a congenial partner. The office would be sensitive to any Norwegian concerns about changing the MOU. Although unable to prevent termination, EUR-ND might point out that NALMEB contributes to the quality of the bilateral

relationship—a point that would be echoed and reinforced by the embassy (see below).

EUR-RPM

EUR-RPM, responsible for regional political-military affairs, would support amending the MOU, especially if the alternative was termination. If DOD was determined to terminate the MOU, EUR-RPM would not attempt to prevent this. It might, however, urge that other ways of working and building interoperability with Norway be developed as a substitute.

American Embassy Oslo

The American Embassy in Oslo differs in important respects from the two offices at Main State. Embassy personnel are frequently reminded by Norwegian officials that NALMEB is seen as important to Norway's security. In addition, the Embassy has acted on several occasions to prevent or alter proposals to reduce or eliminate NALMEB and other U.S. prepositioning programs in Norway.

The Embassy would carefully study any proposal to modify the program, and would be sensitive to Norwegian views of such proposals. Assuming that the Norwegian reaction to proposed mission or equipment changes is as accepting as described in the previous section, it is likely that the Embassy would support such changes as well. Historical evidence suggests that embassy support would be even more likely if changes were discussed and proposed in a bilateral fashion, with Norwegian acceptance from the outset. If the changes were requested without warning and couched as demands, the embassy might attempt to determine whether Norway's acceptance resulted from a belief that the alternative was termination. If this were the case, embassy support would not be guaranteed.

The Embassy would exert considerable effort to prevent termination of the NALMEB program. Although it cannot block this course of action if OSD is willing to pursue it, the embassy has demonstrated a willingness to appeal directly to the Secretary of Defense when it feels that the program is threatened. The embassy also makes its concerns known to the Secretary of State. If the Secretary of Defense were

willing to proceed despite the embassy's objections, it is possible that the Ambassador could persuade the Secretary of State to intervene with the Secretary of Defense or, conceivably, with the President.

Conclusions

Of the four courses of action analyzed here, COAs 1 and 2, changing or adding to the NALMEB mission and equipment mix, appear to be politically feasible. COA 3, changing the MOU to permit deployment of Norwegian supporting forces, would not be supported by Norwegian stakeholders and is therefore not politically feasible. COA 4, termination, would be very difficult, although it could be effected unilaterally despite Norwegian concerns.

The positions of the five stakeholders on each of the four COAs are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Norwegian and U.S. Stakeholder Views of 4 COAs

COA\Stakeholder	MFA	MOD	CHOD	DOS	OSD
1: Change mission	Pro	Pro	Pro	Pro	Pro
2: Change equipment set	Pro	Pro	Pro	Pro	Pro
3: Include possibility of deploying NW supporting forces	Con	Con	Con	Con given NW con	Con given NW con
4: Termination	Con but no authority	Con			

Changing or adding to the NALMEB mission is politically feasible, although adding missions is more feasible than deleting the existing one. All Norwegian stakeholders would agree to this, and their willingness would shape the positions of U.S. stakeholders. The Office of the Secretary of Defense is interested in increasing the flexibility of its response options; changing the NALMEB mission statement supports that goal. The American Embassy in Oslo, the most active of the

Department of State stakeholders, has also noted Norwegian willingness to change the program and would therefore also be inclined to support such changes. Embassy support would also be boosted by proceeding in an open manner with Norway and keeping the Embassy informed of proposals for change.

Changing or adding to the NALMEB equipment mix is also politically feasible. This course of action has the support of all Norwegian stakeholders as well. The Ministry of Defense staff, the final decision maker on the Norwegian side, is especially supportive. As a result, it is unlikely to meet opposition from American stakeholders. The Office of the Secretary of Defense appears to be interested in changing the NALMEB equipment mix at least to the extent that Norway is supportive. Major additions not required for the defense of Norway may spur Norwegian requests that the U.S. assume a greater share of the operations and maintenance costs, however. CHOD may oppose major substitutions of equipment unless it can be shown that, in the unlikely event of a crisis, items suitable for the original mission can be returned to Norway within a reasonable time.

Course of action 3, changing the MOU to allow deployment of Norwegian support forces for missions outside Norway, is not politically feasible. All Norwegian stakeholders see significant obstacles to doing this, and would therefore be unwilling to commit to it in any formal document.

Course of action 4, terminating the NALMEB program, is legally possible but would be very difficult politically. Although they cannot prevent termination, all Norwegian stakeholders would register deep concern with their U.S. counterparts at any move in this direction. The American Embassy in Oslo, although it also lacks the formal power to veto such action, would appeal strongly to the Secretary of Defense and possibly the Secretary of State to prevent termination, citing the program—as it has before—as a cornerstone of the U.S.–Norwegian bilateral relationship. The Office of the Secretary of Defense, which as DOD’s signatory agency for the MOU has the authority to terminate the program, would be unlikely to approve such action unless the savings, decremented by the costs discussed above, could provide important capabilities in other areas.

This memorandum completes our tasking to determine the political feasibility of changing or terminating the NALMEB program. Our findings validate the assumptions used in [7] to develop potential missions for NALMEB outside Norway. In the next and final phase of our effort, we will research, analyze, and document procedures for implementing changes.

Appendix: Stakeholders and other personnel interviewed

Norway

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- Deputy Secretary General
- Director General, Department for Security Policy and Bilateral Relations with the U.S.A. and Canada, and Russian and the CIS countries
- Deputy Director General for Bilateral Relations with the U.S.A. and Canada
- Deputy Director General for Global Security and Nuclear Safety

Ministry of Defense

- Director General, Department for Security Policy
- Chief of Defense (CHOD) Deputy Director for Operations
- Commanding General, Land Command Troendelag

Norwegian Embassy, Washington DC

- Counselor for Security and Defense Issues
- Assistant Defense Naval Attache

Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies

- Director and members of the research staff

United States

Department of Defense Office of the Secretary of Defense

- Desk officer for Nordic and Baltic Region
- Staff members, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy
- Presentation and discussion at U.S.-Norwegian Bilateral Study Group, co-chaired by Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Policy) and Norwegian Under Secretary of Defense for Plans and Policies

Department of State

- Desk officer, Norway and Denmark, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs
- Deputy Director, European Region Political-Military Affairs, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs
- Ambassador and country team, American Embassy Norway

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