3GPP TSG SA WG3 Security — MAP Security ad-hoc **S3z010121**

13 September, 2001

Sophia Antipolis, France

Source: **TSG-SA WG3 MAPsec ad-hoc**

To: **CN WG4**

Title: **LS on MAPsec error handling**

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Attachments: **S3z010120**

S3 have produced a CR to TS 33.200 V4.0.0 (attached as S3z010120) that describes the detailed processing of MAPsec messages.

One of the topics raised during the discussions is that errors shall be reported back to the sending MAP-NE. Detected MAPsec errors may be due to database inconsistencies (SAD, SPD) between the 2 communicating entities or due to problems within the receiving the MAP-NE. Such kind of operational problems shall be reported back to the sending MAP-NE in order to avoid worthless reattempts. Other MAPsec errors could be due to an attacker that is for example re-playing old MAPsec messages. However, the receiving MAP-NE can not distinguish between an error due to attacks or due to configuration problems. Therefore from a security perspective, S3 wants to ensure that all **MAPsec errors** (excluding 'ApplicationContextNotSupported') reported back to the sending MAP-NE, are coded generically (i.e '**MAPsec error'** or alike), in order not to reveal useful information to an attacker.

Actions on CN WG4:

Therefore S3 kindly asks N4 to check TS 29.002 for consistency with the elaborated S3-flows and to take the appropriate actions if needed. In addition to this, S3 asks feedback from N4 if discarding MAP messages (see bullets 5 and 6 of S3z010120) is consistent with the MAP protocol stack handling.

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13 September, 2001, Sophia Antipolis, France

CR-Form-v4

CHANGE REQUEST

⌘ **33.200** **CR** 007 ⌘ rev **-** ⌘ Current version: **4.0.0** ⌘

*For **HELP** on using this form, see bottom of this page or look at the pop-up text over the ⌘ symbols.*

Proposed change affects: ⌘ (U)SIM ☐ ME/UE ☐ Radio Access Network ☐ Core Network ☒

Title:	⌘	MAPsec Message Flow including extra SPD table
Source:	⌘	SA WG3 (MAP ad-hoc)
Work item code:	⌘	MAPsec
Date:	⌘	13-09-2001
Category:	⌘	**F**
Release:	⌘	Rel-4

Use one of the following categories:
F *(correction)*
A *(corresponds to a correction in an earlier release)*
B *(addition of feature),*
C *(functional modification of feature)*
D *(editorial modification)*
Detailed explanations of the above categories can be found in 3GPP TR 21.900.

Use one of the following releases:
2 (GSM Phase 2)
R96 (Release 1996)
R97 (Release 1997)
R98 (Release 1998)
R99 (Release 1999)
REL-4 (Release 4)
REL-5 (Release 5)

Reason for change:	⌘	a) To remove the editors note in clause 5.2 b) Including message flows in the specification
Summary of change:	⌘	Add message flows to the specification
Consequences if not approved:	⌘	These changes were requested by SA#12. Without these corrections, the specification would be incomplete.

Clauses affected:	⌘	4, 5.2, New annex B		
Other specs affected:	⌘	☐ Other core specifications ☐ Test specifications ☐ O&M Specifications	⌘	29.002
Other comments:	⌘			

4 Principles of MAP application layer security

This technical specification defines mechanisms for protecting the MAP protocol at the application layer. The MAP protocol may also be protected at the network layer when IP is used as the transport protocol. However, whenever inter-working with networks using SS7-based transport is necessary, protection at the application layer shall be used.

Before protection can be applied, Security Associations (SA) needs to be established between the respective MAP network elements. Security associations define, among other things, which keys, algorithms, and protection profiles to use to protect MAP signalling. The necessary MAP-SAs between networks are negotiated between the respective network operators. The negotiated SA will be effective PLMN-wide and distributed to all network elements which implement MAP application layer security within the PLMN. Signalling traffic protected at the application layer will, for routing purposes, be indistinguishable from unprotected traffic to all parties except for the sending and receiving entities.

Protection at the application layer implies changes to the application protocol itself to allow for the necessary security functionality to be added.

The MAP application layer security interface between MAP-NEs engaged in security protected signalling is referred to in this specification as the Zf interface. The interface applies to all MAPsec transactions, intra- or inter-PLMN.

Annex B includes detailed procedures on how secure MAP signalling is performed between two MAP-NEs.

5 MAP security (MAPsec)

5.1 Security services provided by MAPsec

The security services provided by MAPsec are:

- data integrity;
- data origin authentication;
- anti-replay protection;
- confidentiality (optional).

5.2 Properties and tasks of MAPsec enabled network elements

MAPsec MAP-NEs shall maintain the following databases:

- NE-SPD-MAP: A database in an NE containing MAP security policy information (see clause 5.3);
- NE-SADB-MAP: A database in an NE containing MAP-SA information. MAP-NEs shall monitor the SA lifetime and expired SAs shall be deleted from the database (see clause 5.4).

MAPsec MAP-NEs shall be able to perform the following operations:

- Secure MAP signalling (i.e. send/receive protected or unprotected messages) according to information in NE-SPD-MAP and NE-SADB-MAP. The structure of protected messages is defined in clause 5.5 and the protection algorithms are defined in clause 5.6.

~~Editor's note: Message flows to illustrate the in/out processing sequences are under development.~~

Annex B (Normative): MAPsec message flows

Imagine a network scenario with two MAP-NEs at different PLMNs (NEa and NEb) willing to communicate using MAPsec. Figure 1 presents the message flow.

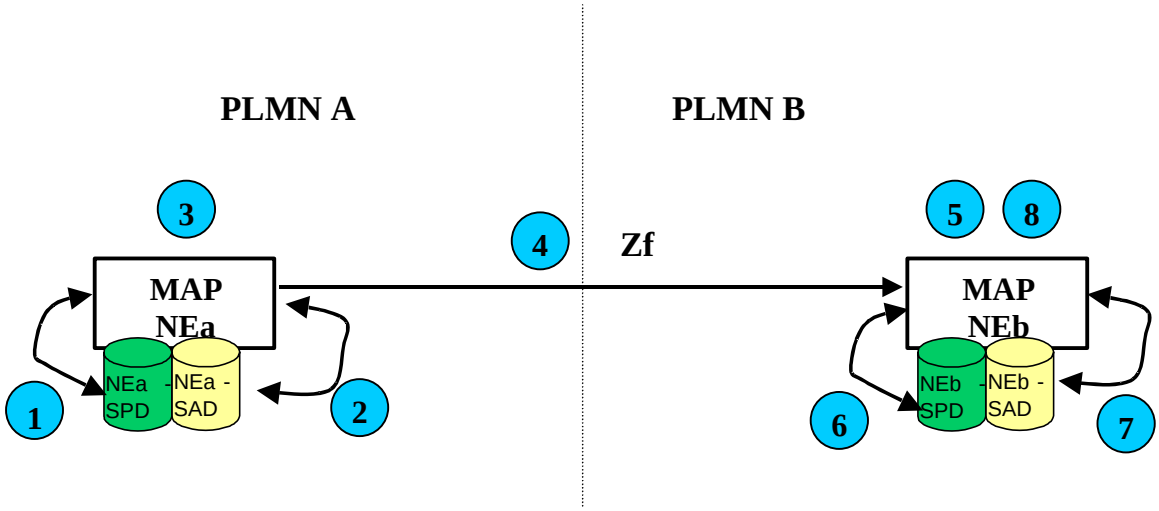

Figure 1. MAPsec Message Flow

According to Figure 1, when MAP-NEa (NEa) from PLMN A wishes to communicate with a MAP-NEb (NEb) of PLMN B using MAP protocol, the process is the following:

As the Sending Entity, NEa performs the following actions during the outbound processing of every MAP message:

1. NEa checks its Security Policy Database (SPD) to check if MAP security mechanisms shall be applied towards PLMN B:

   a) If the SPD does not mandate the use of MAPsec towards PLMN B, then normal MAP communication procedures will be used and the process continues in step 4.b.

   b) If the SPD mandates the use of MAPsec towards PLMN B, then the process continues at step 2.

   c) If no valid entry in the SPD is found for PLMN B, then the communication is aborted and an error is returned to.

2. NEa checks its Security Association Database (SAD) for a valid Security Association (SA) to be used towards PLMN B. In the case where more than one valid SA is available at the SAD, NEa shall choose the one expiring the sooner.

   a) In case protection of MAP messages towards PLMN B is not possible (e.g. no SA available, invalid SA…), then the communication is aborted and an error is returned to MAP user.

   b) If a valid SA exists but the MAP dialogue being handled does not require protection (Protection Mode 0 applies to all the components of the dialogue), then either the original MAP message in cleartext is sent in step 4.b, or a MAPsec message with Protection Mode 0 is created in step 3.

   c) If a valid SA exists and the MAP dialogue being handled requires protection, then the process continues at step 3.

3. NEa constructs the MAPsec message towards NEb using the parameters (keys, algorithms and protection profiles) found in the SA.

4. NEa generates either:

   a) MAPsec message towards NEb.

   b) An unprotected MAP message in the event that the SPD towards NEb or protection profiles for that specific MAP dialogue so allows it (1.a. or 2.b.).

At the Receiving Entity, NEb performs the following actions during the inbound processing of every MAP message it received:

5. If an unprotected MAP message is received, the process continues with step 6.

   Otherwise, NEb decomposes the received MAPsec message and retrieves basic information to apply security measures ('SPI', 'sending PLMN-ID', 'TVP', 'IV' and 'Original Component Identifier').

   Freshness of the protected message is checked at this time. If the Time Variant Parameter (TVP) received in the protected message is out of the acceptable window then the message shall be discarded and an error is returned to MAP user. No error message is returned to NEa.

6. NEb checks the SPD:

   An unprotected MAP message is received:

   a) If an unprotected MAP message is received and fallback to unprotected mode is allowed, then the unprotected MAP message is simply processed (Process goes to END)

   b) If an unprotected MAP message is received and the 'MAPsec operation components table' of the SPD does not mandate the use of MAPsec for the included 'Original Component Identifier', then the unprotected MAP message is simply processed (Process goes to END)

   c) If an unprotected MAP message is received, the 'MAPsec operation components table' of the SPD mandates the use of MAPsec for the included 'Original Component Identifier' and fallback to unprotected mode is NOT allowed, then the message is discarded.

      If the MAP dialogue is still open and it is waiting for an answer, NEb also reports an error back to NEa.

   A MAPsec message is received:

   d) If no valid entry in the SPD is found for PLMN A, then the message is discarded and an error is reported to MAP user.

      If the MAP dialogue is still open and it is waiting for an answer, NEb also reports an error back to NEa.

   e) If a MAPsec message is received, but the SPD indicates that MAPsec is NOT to be used, then the message is discarded and an error is reported to MAP user.

      If the MAP dialogue is still open and it is waiting for an answer, NEb also reports an error back to NEa.

   f) If a MAPsec message is received and the SPD indicates that MAPsec is required, then the process continues at step 7.

7. NEb checks its SAD to retrieve the relevant SA-information for processing of the MAPsec message:

   a) If the received SPI points to a valid SA, then the process continues at step 8.

   b) If the received SPI does not point to a valid SA, the message is discarded and an error is reported to MAP user. If the MAP dialogue is still open and it is waiting for an answer, NEb also reports an error back to NEa.

8. Integrity and encryption mechanisms are applied on the message using the information in the SA (Keys, algorithms, protection profiles).

a) If the result after applying such mechanisms is NOT successful then the message is discarded and an error is reported to MAP user. If the MAP dialogue is still open and it is waiting for an answer, NEb also reports an error back to NEa.

b) If the result after applying such procedures is successful, then NEb has the cleartext MAP message NEa originally wanted to send NEb. The cleartext MAP message can now be processed (Process goes to END)

END: A cleartext MAP message is available at NEb.

In the event the received message at NEb requires an answer to NEa (Return Result/Error), NEb will perform the process in steps 1 to 4 acting as the Sender and NEa will perform the process in steps 5 to 8 acting as the Receiver.

In the event a MAPsec enabled NE initiated a secured MAP communication towards a non-MAPsec enabled NE and the MAPsec enabled NE received an error indication of such circumstance (i.e. “ApplicationContextNotSupported”). The MAPsec enabled NE shall check whether “Fallback to Unprotected Mode” is allowed:

- If NOT allowed, then the communication is aborted.
- If allowed, then the MAPsec enabled NE shall send an unprotected MAP message instead.

The same procedures shall apply to secure MAP communications between MAP-NEs in the same PLMN.

NOTE: Because various error cases may be caused by active attacks, it is highly recommended that the cases are reported to the management system.