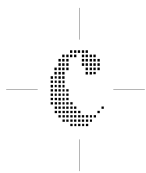


Towards a European Strategic Concept

Alfred van Staden, Kees Homan, Bert Kreemers,
Alfred Pijpers and Rob de Wijk

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Netherlands Institute of
International Relations
'Clingendael'
Clingendael 7
2597 VH The Hague
P.O. Box 93080
2509 AB The Hague
Phonenumber: #-31-70-3245384
Telefax: #-31-70-3282002
Email: research@clingendael.nl
Website: <http://www.clingendael.nl>

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Introduction

The European Union is actively engaged in meeting the institutional and military conditions for pursuing a Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP). In March 2000 the institutional machinery started to run with the establishment of interim bodies, such as the Political and Security Committee, the Military Committee and a Military Staff. A set of principles, guidelines and modalities are currently formulated for arrangements between the European Union and NATO as well as between EU and non-EU member states. Furthermore, preparations are under way to convene a 'Capabilities Commitment Conference' on 20 November 2000, on which occasion EU member states will provide the European Union with their contributions for the achievement of the Helsinki Headline Goal of a rapidly deployable military force, an equivalent to an army corps with air and naval components. This conference will be an important milestone on the road towards the establishment of a force for autonomous action, as was decided at the Helsinki EU-Summit in December 1999.

These developments are remarkable in view of the widespread scepticism about the feasibility of a CESDP which until recently prevailed in many Western European capitals. However, one main building block is still out of the loop in the current preparations for the common project. What is missing is a *Strategic Concept* linking EU's military capabilities to its political objectives. In such a concept, which firmly has to state the political and strategic rationale for the CESDP, questions have to be addressed as to *where* and *when* Europe will make use of its military capabilities, *what kind* of operations will be conducted under the auspices of the European Union and *how* such operations will be conducted. At first glance, these questions look quite simple. On reflection, however, one realises that answers are not easily given. Any attempt to define clear-cut strategic guidelines is likely to reveal disagreements and different priorities among EU countries, thus undermining today's broad consensus about CESDP's general objectives.

One cannot fail to recognise that there is a 'calculated ambiguity' in the strategic implications of the Headline Goal. In other words 'a certain studied imprecision' affects the eventual destination of CESDP.¹

Yet, perhaps paradoxically, without a clear strategic view, accompanied by a set of criteria for taking action, Europe will find it extremely difficult to reach agreement on the use of its military resources if faced by international crises. Equally, without a conceptual mechanism to sort out the contingencies that may or may not require the application of appropriate military and non-military crisis-management tools by the European Union, the Union will be carried along by events and incidents. As a result, European countries run the risk of drifting apart whenever the practical value of CESDP, envisaged as one of the most ambitious projects in the history of European integration, is tested.

When the countries of the Western European Union, on 27 October 1987, adopted the so-called 'The Hague Platform on European Security Interests', it was said that there was at that stage a 'nice platform', but 'no train'. Now that the EU has started the process towards building a rapidly deployable force, European countries must have at least some idea about its destination. Again, this is easier said than done. Many questions need to be answered. In order to specify the necessary capabilities for the Helsinki Headline Goal, decisions have to be taken on the kinds of operations to be carried out. True, a number of so-called 'Illustrative Mission Profiles', ranging from separation by force to humanitarian aid and evacuation, are now being formulated. But these profiles will guide policy makers and military planners to a certain extent only, because they are not intended to furnish criteria enabling European leaders to determine *what* particular situation may require *what* sort of operation. They are not meant to define the operational range for EU-led missions either.

The lack of strategic guidance also creates uncertainty about both the numbers and nature of the required military means and support systems.² The same goes for the prospects of a division of labour between the European Union and NATO, as long as it is unclear *whether*, *where* and *when* the European Union is able and willing to carry out operations.

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- 1) François Heisbourg, 'Europe's Strategic Ambitions: The Limits of Ambiguity'. In: *Survival*, vol. 42, no. 2, Summer 2000, p. 5.
 - 2) Alain Richard, the French minister of Defence, mentioned at his press conference after the Informal Meeting of EU ministers of Defence at Eouen, 22 September 2000, that a total number of 80,000 ground forces, 300-350 combat aircraft and 80 naval vessels would be sufficient to carry out four different types of missions, identified under the Petersberg tasks. Besides separation by force, conflict prevention (preventive deployment), humanitarian aid and evacuation were listed as 'Illustrative Mission Profiles'. Interestingly, the German Defence minister, Rudolf Scharping, explained that these missions should be carried out over a range of no more than 4,000 kilometres from Brussels ('Scharping sagt 18000 Mann zu', in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 23/24 September 2000).

Recent experience suggests that the political support for any military operation rests for a large part on a clear understanding of the type of mission under consideration. Vagueness in this respect could be very harmful at the very moment a political justification has to be given for the use of military force by the European Union.

In addition to these rather general, political considerations underlining the necessity or at least the desirability for strategic guidance in the CESP, the availability of a Strategic Concept may facilitate the solution of many delicate practical problems. At present, no European country is able to conduct very demanding, high-risk operations on its own. A Strategic Concept may stimulate military planning at the European level, and may also be conducive to role specialisation between the EU member states. This may, in turn, lead to the elimination or at least the significant reduction of national overlaps and redundancies. In the best of all worlds, the net financial gains to be derived from increased efficiency and effectiveness in military spending through the creation of European pools of military resources as well as by role differentiation among countries would compensate to a large extent the funds needed to fill up the deficiencies and shortcomings, as exposed in the WEU-Audit and NATO's Defence Capabilities Initiative.

This paper was written for a high level conference of directors of the security branches in the ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Defence of the 15 EU member states. The seminar, co-sponsored by the Netherlands ministry of Foreign Affairs, was held on 5 and 6 October 2000 at the Clingendael Institute.³ The paper discusses most of the issues referred to above, and seeks to identify the basic elements for working out a European Strategic Concept. Dealing with institutional matters, the first chapter addresses the question of whether the present and envisaged changes in the structure of EU decision-making on security and defence matters do satisfy the need for effective decision-making and timely action. Improvements are suggested. The second chapter focuses on the question of how military operations can or should be conducted. Ideas and solutions to overcome difficulties envisaged in the domain of command and control are examined. The third chapter analyses the varying intensity and, concomitantly, the different military requirements of the operations covered under the Petersberg tasks.

3) It was the Netherlands minister of Foreign Affairs, Jozias van Aartsen, who raised the need for a strategic concept at a rather early stage of the development of a European Security and Defence Policy. (See his speech for the Netherlands Society of International Affairs, The Hague, 9 March 1999: 'I would therefore suggest that the European Union, taking NATO's Strategic Concept as its point of departure, develop a common security concept that combines political, economic and military aspects into a unified whole.')

The planning for EU-led operations has to take into account a wide array of functions, ranging from low-intensity peace support to high-risk enforcement operations. In the fourth chapter, a geographical approach is taken to look at the scope of European interests, which might justify the use of military capabilities in EU-led operations. The final chapter presents some recommendations.

1 Political Decision -Making on Military Operations

One of the challenges for a Common European Security and Defence Policy is the establishment of an institutional framework, which may effectively translate the political resolve of the EU member states into swift and sound decisions to launch military operations. The acquisition of a military capability with the size of a full corps with 15 brigades could prove to be futile if the European Union does not acquire the institutional ability to take appropriate decisions at the right time. In this chapter, the changes in decision-making the establishment of such a framework implies, are evaluated on the basis of the present *acquis* within the European Union. Do the present structure and culture of decision-making within the European Union provide a solid basis for using the Headline Goal capacity for military operations?

The *Acquis*: engine or break?

The Fifteen have deliberately chosen the second (and not a separate fourth) pillar as the launching platform for their new European defence capacity. It is argued that a close link with the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European Union's 'single institutional framework' may increase the new capacity's effectiveness and may also strengthen the CFSP with the presumed legitimacy of the European Union (EU). Hence the question arises: is the institutional *acquis* of the CFSP, as formulated in the EU Treaties, indeed a suitable basis for Europe's military ambitions? Is it to be taken as the engine of a well functioning decision-making machinery or will it put a break on an active and resolute policy-making process?

Any answer to this question should probably start with recalling a basic feature of fifty years of European integration: the European Communities were developed mainly for *internal* Western European purposes, with a balanced Franco-German relationship and a prosperous common market as the main aims.

Integration occurred primarily in those areas (coal and steel, common market, agriculture, EMU, etc.) where France needed Community institutions and policies to neutralise the perceived threat of German economic predominance. Defence has always escaped these dynamics, partly because of diverging national security interests, but also because the German military resources were no longer an overriding concern to Paris. Indeed, these resources were effectively integrated into NATO, and kept on a leash by various other international treaties and organisations, the Western European Union (WEU) included.

As a consequence, Europe's external posture has assumed a predominantly economic and civilian character, with its emphasis on trade, aid, association policies, and enlargement. Certainly, to this spectre of external economic relations were gradually added various forms of political co-operation, and even a CFSP. But this did not alter the basic fact that the institutions of the European Community/Union were primarily designed for internal West-European political purposes, and not for external power projection, with the possible exception of trade matters. In essential aspects, the EU's political structure and culture differ from those of a military alliance such as NATO. This is clearly reflected in the history, institutional design, and 'mind set' of the CFSP. Here are some examples.

European Defence Policy: its place in the European Union

First, it took a very long time before the European Community/Union assumed responsibilities in the areas of security and defence at all. At the launch of the European Political Co-operation in the early 1970s, these subjects were still completely taboo. Only in the beginning of the 1980s security issues started to appear on the agenda of the meetings of the European foreign ministers, but these issues were confined to their political and economic dimensions. It took another decade before the EU-members dared also to discuss the military aspects, and to raise, in the Treaty of Maastricht, the perspective of a 'common defence'. Ten more years were necessary before the Fifteen were to agree on an 'autonomous', be it modest, European defence capacity. The qualification 'modest' is justified here, because the Headline Goal, as set out in Helsinki, accounts for less than ten percent of the EU-15 total manpower resources, and because collective defence is (still) not covered by the Treaty on the European Union. Even while the Fifteen, in the aftermath of the Helsinki summit, were fully engaged in creating new security institutions in Brussels and in preparing for the Capabilities Commitment Conference, a formal meeting of the Council of EU-defence ministers still had not taken place.

Secondly, although political Co-operation and the CFSP had been designed as an intergovernmental construction, many deliberate attempts have been made to link up its rules and procedures with the Community system.

The European Commission, for instance, 'shall be fully associated with the work carried out in the common foreign and security policy field' (Art. 28), and the Commission was also given a (non-exclusive) right of initiative in this regard. From the perspective of uniformity in managing EU's political and economic external relations, this role could be helpful, but one wonders to what extent this is also the case when it comes to concrete military operations. Here it might be better that the Community orthodoxy of the 'single institutional framework' does not prevail over the practical requirements of crisis management. The same holds true for the (possible) role of other EU institutions, such as the European Parliament or the Court of Justice.

In any case, the presumed compatibility between the non-security and security policy fields of the Union remains of a somewhat academic nature. This is particularly true since one of the foremost architects of the evolving Common Security and Defence Policy, i.e., the United Kingdom, has itself opted out of various key areas of communitarian policy, including EMU and 'Schengen'. It is hard to believe that London (or Paris for that matter) will allow a significant influence of the European Parliament in matters of defence and security.

Thirdly, the European Council of Helsinki has decided to strengthen the non-military instruments for crisis management as well. On 22 May 2000, the Council of Ministers agreed to establish an EU-Committee for the civilian aspects of crisis management; in the Council Secretariat a special co-ordination mechanism for rapid reaction is being set-up. Likewise, the Commission under the active guidance of the commissioner for the CFSP, Chris Patten, is quickly developing instruments for civilian crisis management. There is indeed a certain degree of logic in these measures. Recent history has shown that the management of international crises and disasters requires the deployment of a wide range of non-military means, including police forces, rescue workers, engineering teams and teams for construction, medical staff etc. Having been a 'civilian power' for a long time, the European Union has undoubtedly a reputation to uphold in this respect. But this approach also entails some risks. For one thing, it obscures the fact that civilian measures can only become effective in a militarily controlled environment. For another, it may give the European Union a further alibi to define international problems and their solution primarily in civilian terms, shying away once more from concrete military responsibilities.

Fourthly, the rotating EU-Council Presidency is another complicating factor. Under the present rules, the EU Presidency fulfils some significant functions in the CFSP. For instance, it represents the European Union in its external relations; it is responsible for the implementation of common measures; and it is the Presidency which 'in cases requiring a rapid decision' is competent to 'convene an extraordinary Council meeting within forty-eight hours or, in an emergency, within a shorter period' (Art. 22).

Again, it is unclear to what extent these provisions are also going to rule the common defence policy, but it is certain that the EU/CFSP Presidency already constitutes a heavy burden for the smaller member states, which often lack the necessary diplomatic or military staff and expertise. The High Representative for the CFSP may assume more responsibilities in this regard by permanently chairing the emerging Political and Security Committee, while reducing the Council Presidency to symbolic proportions (as in NATO). But it remains to be seen whether all EU member states are prepared to renounce the firmly entrenched principle of the rotating Presidency, and to revise the relevant treaty provisions. Here again, the orthodoxy of the 'single institutional framework' seems to impede effective crisis management.

Fifthly, an additional problem arises from the CFSP's extremely 'flexible' nature, as may appear from the numerous exception clauses enumerated in title V and the related financial and other protocols. This flexibility is mainly caused by the need to accommodate in CFSP NATO and WEU members, as well as the (former) neutral and non-allied ones. But traditional Community thinking has also played its part. As a result, the decision-making structure and culture of the CFSP have become very 'flexible' indeed. Since NATO and WEU-members have commitments that are different from those of Ireland, Austria, Sweden, and Finland, Art. 17.4 allows for the 'development of closer Co-operation between two or more member-states on a bilateral level'. Denmark constitutes a special case, being a full member of the EU and NATO, but only an observer to the WEU. In Feira the Danish government has explicitly restated its reservations to participating in EU-defence, as formulated in the Protocol on the Position of Denmark, as attached to the Treaty of Amsterdam.⁴

The paragraphs on qualified majority voting and 'abstention' in Art.23 are almost an open invitation to dissent from the common foreign and security policy. While unanimity is the ground rule in the second pillar, for the adoption and implementation of 'joint actions' one may also proceed by qualified majority voting. Apparently, a procedure which has been a marked success in the area of the internal market is expected to be successful in the second pillar as well. But there is an essential difference between majority voting in the first and the second pillar. Majority voting in the first pillar results in decisions that not only bind all members but are also implemented by them. This is not the case in the CFSP.

4) At the press conference after the informal meeting of ministers of Defence in Eouen, 22 September 2000, the French minister of Defence, Alain Richard, stated that 'according to clause 5 of the Amsterdam Treaty Denmark will not be able to contribute to the force.'

Here, a minority of member states deciding to resist certain joint actions always remains a political and diplomatic liability for the outside world, whatever the 'common' European pretext. Moreover, each member state may 'oppose' the adoption of a decision to be taken by qualified majority 'for important and stated reasons of national policy'. In such a case a vote shall not be taken; the 'Council may, acting by a qualified majority, request that the matter be referred to the European Council for decision by unanimity'. Although these rules for qualified majority voting do not pertain to 'decisions having military or defence implications', they indicate that at the central decision-making level unity of action may be in short supply.

The celebrated clauses on 'abstention' in the Treaty of Amsterdam, however, also apply to defence: 'Abstentions by members present in person or represented [in the Council] shall not prevent the adoption of [the CFSP] decisions.

When abstaining in a vote, any member of the Council may qualify its abstention by making a formal declaration under the present subparagraph. In that case, it shall not be obliged to apply the decision, but shall accept that the decision commits the Union. (...) If the members of the Council qualifying their abstention in this way represent more than one third of the votes (...) the decision shall not be adopted'. Such paragraphs are undoubtedly meant to remain a dead letter, but they are nevertheless written in a treaty supposed to steer the European defence capacity. Under the present rules, it is theoretically possible that only a handful of smaller member states block a majority decision on military action.

On these and other points, the differences in political culture between an organisation like NATO and the European Union become obvious. NATO's unity was possible with the combined weight of American leadership, the existence of a powerful common enemy, and the logic of collective defence and security. There were and still are many divergent views across the Atlantic, and among the Europeans themselves, but on the main issues a large degree of consensus, with the exception of France, could usually be reached. Disagreements were controlled through internal pressure. In spite of serious troubles (see next chapter), NATO succeeded somehow in keeping its flock together during the 78 days of the Kosovo air campaign.

The EU culture of dissent is much more open and manifest. Countries such as Greece or Denmark, which in the end tend to conform to the demands of NATO, often prove less compliant in the framework of the CFSP. The European Union has no clear leadership structure, while the Petersberg tasks, even with their 'humanitarian' image, lack the solid political legitimacy of collective defence. Also for other reasons the legitimacy of the EU institutions is a point of concern.

One of the main challenges for the CESDP, then, is to devise an effective political structure at the European Council, Council, and COREPER levels, and to link this structure through the High Representative to the Political and Security Committee, and its subsidiary political and military bodies. At the European Council meeting in Feira some useful steps have already been taken to streamline decision-making procedures. The idea to establish in times of crisis an 'ad-hoc committee' of countries prepared and able to contribute to EU-led military operations should be welcomed. Progress has also been made in designing a framework for structural consultations between the European Union and the various relevant non-EU countries, particularly European NATO-members and EU candidate member states.

Remains the core problem of how the EU Council of fifteen or more members may be able to quickly take the decision to launch any EU military operation. For this purpose, a high degree of political consensus (i.e., unanimity) is required at the (European) Council level. This consensus has to be sustained throughout the subsequent operations. Abstention of member states in the Council will seriously affect the credibility of the EU and that of its operations. At this level, the European Union would need less rather than more 'flexibility'. Delegating some competences of the Council to the COPS may solve some practical problems, but not the political ones. Hence, Article 23 has to be revised. Defence, however, is mostly kept out of the IGC-2000 negotiations proper, mainly because most countries (spearheaded by the French Presidency) fear that the inclusion of this topic may spoil the precarious 'left over' agenda and, eventually, may endanger the ratification of the Treaty of Nice.

According to the Council's legal service, there exists no legal necessity to revise the Treaty on the European Union, in order to implement the Conclusions on the CESDP of the European Councils of Cologne and Helsinki. Altering the Treaty is only required if the Council delegates some of its competences to a subsidiary body of officials (i.e. the Political and Security Committee), or if the EU-paragraphs on the WEU are changed. To what extent these changes will eventually be incorporated into the Treaty of Nice is still uncertain. But after Nice, one should start to consider a complete overhaul of Title V of the EU Treaty in order to address the military ambitions of the European Union.

2 The Command Structure for Military Operations

For any substantial military operation to be successful, unity of command seems to be essential. To conduct an operation involving fifteen or more democratic countries on an equal footing comes, therefore, close to a 'contradictio in terminis'. Conventional wisdom has it that one cannot wage war by large, representative committees. Unlike NATO, the European Union lacks among its ranks a member state powerful enough to perform critical leadership tasks in crisis situations or other dangerous contingencies. Last year's conflict in Kosovo made abundantly clear that maintaining NATO's cohesion and ensuring its decisiveness under war-like conditions is a very demanding task indeed. The allied war effort under American leadership was seen on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean as being hampered by political interference and micromanagement from the nineteen capitals involved.⁵ On the other hand, even the dominant leadership of the United States in this crisis situation could not prevent 'a permanent zig-zag' from occurring in the conduct of the military campaign.⁶

Leadership over military operations

Clearly, there is no substitute for American leadership in the European Union. It may be argued that the Franco-German coalition ('axis'), if such a coalition still exists, could take the lead in dealing with military matters in the European Union.

5) See Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *The United States in the Balkans: There to Stay*. In: *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 2000, p. 159.

6) General Klaus Naumann in Hearings of the House of Lords on the Kosovo War, Spring 2000: 'I do not know how often (the US) changed direction. They do it overnight, as a result of domestic problems back in the United States of America, and then they expect the eighteen other ships following the American convoy leader to change course overnight.'

After all, close collaboration between France and the Federal Republic has proved to be very helpful in moving the process of European integration forward. Franco-German leadership is, however, not a viable option for the foreseeable future. Although Germany has shed much of its traditional reluctance to projecting military power beyond its borders, it will probably take many years for the Bundeswehr to adapt the structure and composition of its land forces to the modern standards of a mobile, rapidly deployable army. Without fundamental changes that go much further than the recent reform measures taken by the German government, Germany will not command the military tools required for swiftly responding to emergencies at some distance from the European heartland. For this reason, a prominent German role in guiding or steering EU-led operations does not look very likely. Moreover, a Franco-German leadership in military affairs would exclude major co-responsibility of the United Kingdom, the country with undoubtedly both the ambition and the capabilities to play a prominent role in EU-led military operations.

However, British leadership in European affairs is unthinkable as long as the United Kingdom takes a hesitant stance towards joining the Economical Monetary Union and 'Schengen'. There is a difference between taking the initiative (together with France) in developing a European security and defence policy on the one hand and taking the lead in executing this policy while standing with only one foot on the European continent on the other hand.

One might, therefore, consider the possibility of entrusting the larger European nations as a whole with the primary responsibility for the political guidance of military operations. However, the creation of a so-called *directoire* of these nations (United Kingdom, France, Germany and perhaps Italy) is most likely to arouse resentment and feelings of marginalisation on the part of the smaller EU member states. While listening to the siren songs of those who recall the old adage of 'no taxation without representation', it would tempt them to indulge in free-riding or freeloading behaviour. With due regard to the need for military operations to be managed effectively, it is also imperative to give an adequate say in the conduct of military operations to *all* countries that are prepared to make available more than token forces, and to accept a fair share in the risks. In the meantime, as was pointed out in the Introduction, the European Union has already set up a number of arrangements, guiding principles and modalities for a proper conduct of military operations. Although further work has still to be done, special attention should be given to the command structure for EU-led operations.

The delegation of command authority

Should the European Union take the lead in a particular operation, the newly established Political and Security Committee is understood to provide political control and strategic direction.

Prior to any decision on the launch of an operation, the Military Committee and EU military staff have to take care of operational planning as well as situation and intelligence assessment. However, since the EU lacks a command structure of its own and is not likely to duplicate NATO's structure in the future, the General Affairs Council (composed of the ministers of Foreign Affairs) and the new EU Defence Council (to be composed of the ministers of Defence) will be forced to subcontract the actual execution of operations either to the headquarters of European multinational forces, such as the Eurocorps and the Ace Rapid Reaction Corps, or in the case of relatively small operations, to (mobile) national headquarters of EU members, such as the United Kingdom and France.

There is a strong argument for making use of headquarters that are part of NATO's command structure. If the EU were to make use of the Alliance's assets and capabilities for the conduct of an operation, and if this operation were to get bogged down because of the EU's poor handling of the military situation, then the United States are likely to become under pressure to bail out the troubled European countries. United States' inclination to do so can be expected to be rather low in case the operation was implemented completely outside the purview of American military authorities.

The application of established command arrangements has the advantage of running military operations whose operational control stay inside the wider NATO structure, without losing the ability of member states to participate in EU-led operations. Making use of these well-proven arrangements may facilitate the formation of an EU-led operation in which a considerable number of non-EU member states are prepared to participate. The use of existing structures also makes sense for other reasons. When a crisis emerges, it will be uncertain for some time under which umbrella military measures might be taken. Consultations in one forum will be followed by deliberations in another organisational setting. In the meantime, planning the military operation has to start without delay and several options have to be worked out regardless of the organisation in which a military operation might be undertaken. On the basis of about the same groundwork, either the European Union or NATO could take the lead, or perhaps the United States and in particular cases one of the larger European countries.⁷

7) See: *The Economist*, September 9th, 2000: 'Weathering the storm'.

This approach has some other obvious advantages. The old mission of NATO and the WEU - collective defence - would remain unaffected, despite reduced capacity to implement it. The envisaged structure would meet three key principles: improvement of European defence capabilities; inclusiveness and transparency for all allies; and the indivisibility of transatlantic security. Non-members of NATO and the EU could participate, since only Article V commitments are inconsistent with their non-allied or neutral status. It would also facilitate EU enlargement in the field of security and include non-members of the European Union who are participants in Partnership for Peace. NATO members who are not members of the European Union may choose to participate in these operations. Present members may take part in the joint command structure on a voluntary basis. Those who do not want to take part in the new missions could limit themselves to traditional collective defence tasks.

This might help to solve two important issues of authority crucial to the success of building a rapidly deployable European capacity for autonomous action. First, since peacetime training remains a national responsibility, ideally common definitions are a necessary tool for the commanders of multinational formations to direct exercise schedules, to design training programmes, and to inspect both. At the very least, the Military Committee of the European Union should establish an agreed set of tasks, conditions and standards. It goes without saying that in a joint command structure the adherence to such a demanding set of requirements is a challenge much easier to be met than in an environment where two separate command structures are dictating the requirements for two fundamentally different orientations. A robust 'mission-essential task list' should be drafted, since such a list may be used by multinational commanders to validate the necessary training standards.

A second issue refers to the question of the 'transfer' of authority over forces from nations to a multinational force commander. It is not realistic to expect nations to surrender the operational authority of their forces well before their deployment, i.e., before the governments concerned have taken a decision to participate in a military operation and before the national parliaments have consented to such a decision. Operational control will be transferred to the multinational force commander only following the units' arrival in the area of operations. This delay in the preparations cannot be overcome easily. But in a joint command structure a multinational force commander can make himself quite familiar with the main elements of the possible national contributions without losing time waiting for a final decision on the choice between NATO, the EU or some sort of ad-hoc coalition to lead the operation.

However, more has to be done to ensure solidarity and risk-sharing among European countries. Making use of existing, though merged structures will undoubtedly ask a heavy price from those countries that might tilt toward 'opting-out'.

Relations will sour should those countries nevertheless choose to follow the road of 'constructive abstention' when other member states (and partners) prepare themselves to take the risks arising from a military operation within the domain of the Petersberg tasks. One cannot expect the creation of a European military capacity to be paired to a search for loopholes for staying aside at the moment of decisive action. There is, of course, no guarantee that all EU member states will take the same position at all times and decide as a solid block to carry out far-reaching military decisions. While role specialisation is still something of a taboo within and between the national armed forces, 'pooling' and the formation of common resources and units is no longer a vague, futuristic idea. Along this line, common endeavours, such a 'pool' of strategic air lift and sea lift, a multinational logistical support system, combined command-and-control facilities and joint multinational headquarters, a firmly integrated multinational intelligence branch and so on, may enhance the cohesiveness of a Union with fifteen or more member states.

Since the four biggest countries account for almost 80 percent of the total of defence expenditures in the European Union, several other methods have to be applied to find a balance between the larger and smaller EU member states. Common terms of reference among EU member states identifying the advantages, disadvantages and risks of military operations in particular countries or regions may be helpful. Therefore, it may be advisable to agree upon a 'Framework of Assessment' for the identification of criteria and considerations that have to be taken into account before making any decision to launch an operation. Of course, such a common assessment cannot avoid differences of opinion about the desirability of embarking on a particular EU-led operation. But, in all likelihood, it can be instrumental in building consensus among fifteen different nations as to the fundamental question of which contingencies might require intervention and which not.

The new EU Defence Council, composed of the ministers of Defence, has still to be established. It will be entrusted with the collective planning of the Petersberg tasks. Preferably, it would initiate a European Defence White Paper and, by harmonising the distinct national defence efforts, set in motion a process of convergence. With these commonly accepted policies, the national defence efforts can all be steered in the same direction. Such a radical idea may take some time and a lot of energy. To stimulate such a process, the Paris based WEU Institute for Security Studies may take the initiative to bring the national institutes of international relations of EU countries together in a concerted effort to find, on the basis of in-depth research studies, practical solutions to the problems arising from the quest for national defence convergence and harmonisation.

3 The Petersberg Tasks: a functional approach

Back to Petersberg

If history tells us something about the future, Europe would have to guess at the precise definition of the Petersberg tasks, which hold such a prominent place in the formulation of a Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP). There seem to be two interpretations of the Petersberg tasks. The narrow interpretation is the original meaning of 'humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks, and tasks of combat forces, including peace making'. At the Rhine resort of Petersberg, the ministerial meeting of the Foreign and Defence ministers of the Western European Union was held on 19 June 1992 against the background of the rather limited role of the Western European Union in the Gulf-conflict in 1990 and the EU's military impotence during the first year of the civil war in former Yugoslavia. Looking for an operational role for the WEU, the ministerial meeting committed an exercise in modesty. The formulation of the three Petersberg tasks must, in this interpretation, be seen and interpreted in the light of the very limited resources available to the WEU at that time. The EU police force in Mostar, WEU's contribution to the naval force in the Adriatic supervising the arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia as well as the blockade of the Danube for the same purpose, and finally the Multinational Advising Police Element in Albania, concerned operations which originated from the ministerial decisions at Petersberg.

The new, broad interpretation is closely linked to the development of a CESDP, which took a long road from the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) to the French-British Summit of St. Malo (December 1998) and from there to the EU Council Meetings of Cologne, Helsinki and Feira. At first sight, it goes much further than the original intentions. All sorts of operations, 'including the most demanding', with the clear exception of collective defence, are covered by this interpretation.

However, it raises questions about the sufficiency of the Helsinki Headline Goal of a force of up to 15 brigades or 50,000-60,000 military by 2003. As François Heisbourg has pointed out, with the new, extensive interpretation, massive and forceful military interventions on the scale of the Korean War (1950-1953) and the Gulf War (1991) are included into the peace enforcing segment of the Petersberg tasks. As a matter of fact, even the humanitarian component of the Petersberg tasks may be more demanding than it appears at first blush. Thus, for example, for the execution of Operation 'Provide Comfort' in Kurdistan in 1991 a force of up to 30,000 military was deployed.⁸

A catalogue of types of operations

Since 1990, military force has been employed by a number of European states in a wide range of operations. Because a functional approach to the Petersberg tasks will be followed in this chapter, a classification of these operations may be helpful in finding workable definitions of the different tasks and in making a comparison between the military requirements for each type of operation on the one hand and the capabilities to be provided for the implementation of the Helsinki Headline Goal on the other.

Humanitarian aid and rescue tasks are jointly known as humanitarian operations. Military personnel may contribute to disaster relief or offer humanitarian aid. Usually, humanitarian operations precede or accompany activities of civilian relief organisations. Military personnel could, without losing precious time following a disaster, provide logistical and engineering support, as happened earlier this year in Mozambique, last year in Turkey and in 1998 in Honduras. Under some circumstances, humanitarian aid and rescue tasks have to be carried out in an insecure environment. Consequently, as was the case in Congo in 1995, military personnel is also needed to create a secure environment for relief organisations and humanitarian military support. Depending on the nature of the disaster and the distance from the European continent, these operations can be very demanding in terms of the numbers of troops as well as regarding numbers and types of equipment and platforms. The same applies to rescue operations, which usually require an immense effort. For instance, in order to take Captain Scott O'Grady out of Bosnia in 1995, more than 500 sorties had to be flown in five days, i.e., roughly half the number of the total British strike sorties flown during the entire Kosovo conflict.⁹

8) François Heisbourg, 'European Defence. Strategic Ambitions and Convergence', Brussels, 29 March 2000.

9) James P. Thomas, 'The Military Challenges of Transatlantic Coalitions', *Adelphi Paper* 333, p. 52.

Preventive diplomacy is part of the broader activity of conflict prevention, which may include both diplomatic initiatives and economic measures. Preventive diplomacy might also entail military support to the local authorities for helping them to maintain civil order and the rule of law. Preventive deployment is the most likely *military* activity in the context of preventive diplomacy. The deployment of a United Nations force in Macedonia during the 1990s is a clear example in this respect. This operation was conducted under Chapter VI of the UN Charter. Its objective was to contribute to the stability of the region, by continuously sending a signal to the Yugoslav authorities that any aggression against Macedonia would result in a concerted reaction by the international community. Any military force deployed for preventing the outbreak of conflict serves as a tripwire. Should the need arise (in case of aggression), it must trigger the deployment of a larger, preferably more robust force. As deterrence is the key element of preventive deployment, the credibility of the mission depends on the availability of an adequate back-up capability. Size and nature of such a force will depend upon particular circumstances, but they are likely to be about similar to the capabilities needed for a robust peacekeeping or peace enforcing operation.

Peacekeeping operations are undertaken to monitor and facilitate a peace process. They are conducted with the consent of all parties concerned, and carried out in an impartial way.¹⁰ Usually, peacekeeping operations are undertaken under Chapter VI of the UN Charter. Peacekeepers will refrain from taking actions or applying techniques that may antagonise one or more parties since any loss of consent is likely to limit their freedom of action and, consequently, to endanger the continuation of the mission.

In Europe, both first- and second-generation peacekeeping operations have been (and are still being) carried out. First-generation peacekeeping involves inter-positioning and monitoring of cease-fires and peace agreements. Force will not be used, except in case of self-defence. This form of peacekeeping tends to be a relatively low-risk operation. Since the 1960s, the United Nations is carrying out a traditional inter-positioning operation in Cyprus; from 1974 this operation has been effective in separating the conflicting parties on the island.

10) Experience shows, however, that in the context of intra-State/transnational conflicts, consent may be manipulated in many ways. Impartiality for the United Nations operations must therefore mean adherence to the principles of the Charter: where one party to a peace agreement clearly and incontrovertibly is violating its terms, continued equal treatment of all parties by the United Nations can in the best case result in ineffectiveness and in the worst may amount to complicity with evil. No failure did more damage to the standing and credibility of United Nations peacekeeping in the 1990s than its reluctance to distinguish victim from aggressor. Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, New York, 21 August 2000, A/55/305, p. ix.

Both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo are at present the scene of second-generation peacekeeping operations. One of the major differences with first-generation operations is that the use of force to impose peace is not excluded. Thereto, peacekeepers have been given a mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The Dayton Accords of 1995 paved the way to the creation of the Implementation Force (IFOR) and, subsequently, of the Stabilisation Force (SFOR). Both IFOR and SFOR were intended to support the peace process by performing complex multinational peacekeeping operations, involving the monitoring of the peace process, humanitarian aid and reconstruction of the country, including democratisation, economic development and institution building. A similar operation was organised in Kosovo in 1999. The success of multifunctional operations heavily depends on close co-operation between various institutions, such as the European Union, the United Nations, NATO and the OSCE. Its success also depends on civil-military co-operation (CIMIC) between the peace support force and non-governmental organisations.¹¹

In this respect, it is impossible to distinguish between this type of operations and *peace-building operations*, which support economic, social and military measures and structures aimed at strengthening and solidifying political settlements with the objective to redress the causes of a conflict. Thus, like preventive diplomacy and second-generation peacekeeping, peace building is a multifunctional undertaking. Military force could be used, conceptually similar to preventive deployment, in support of local authorities to maintain civil order and the rule of law, including the supervision of elections. Military personnel could also be used for mine clearance and demilitarisation, particularly the collection of arms. The UN operations in Haiti (UNMIH) and Cambodia (UNTAC), fall in this category. They show that these kinds of operations are quite demanding in terms of the numbers of troops and of experts and other qualified personnel.

First-generation peacekeeping and peace-building operations are operations at the lower end of the conflict spectrum entailing, by definition, low risks. Second-generation operations may involve large-scale, war-fighting operations. In any case, 'to be the best at peacekeeping, you need first to be the best at war-fighting'.¹²

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- 11) For some useful guidelines for the division of labour and therefore the success of this kind of co-operation between both types of organisations see: Larry Minear, Ted van Baarda and Marc Sommers, NATO and Humanitarian Action in the Kosovo Crisis, Occasional Paper #36, Thomas J. Watson Jr Institute for International Studies and the Humanitarian Law Consultancy.
 - 12) Speech by Rt.Hon. George Robertson, RUSI conference on NATO, London, March 1999.

Therefore, a robust force is required, capable of dealing with irregular forces led by warlords and regular armed forces with a central command. The success of second-generation peacekeeping operations is critically connected with escalation dominance, i.e., parties must be fully aware that jeopardising the peace process could result in a punitive confrontation with the peace-support force. Consequently, the credibility of the force depends on the ability to fight and prevail in case of a confrontation with the conflicting party or parties.

These qualitative requirements have to be reflected in the size and structure of any European capacity. Flexibility is a keyword in this context. Every second-generation peacekeeping operation will demand a different set of capabilities whilst the need for capabilities may change during the operation, as was the case in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In this area, a robust IFOR comprising more than 50,000 military has now been reduced to a more modest force of less than half that size. Second-generation peacekeeping operations may require large numbers of soldiers and capabilities, such as engineering, logistics as well as police units and other civilian assets. For a peacekeeping operation of 50,000 military to sustain over a period of a year or longer, a threefold number of troops has to be available. To this end, many of the force elements for the most demanding 'illustrative mission profile' ('Separation by Force') are required.

With a 'separation by force' operation we enter the domain of *peace-enforcing operations*. These may include a variety of operations, such as protection of the local population; restoring law and order; limiting the freedom of action of parties; containing the conflict in question; establishing and protecting safe areas, embargoes and blockades; incidental coercive measures and humanitarian interventions. These operations are coercive in nature, designed to re-establish the peace. For that reason, peace-enforcing operations may be carried out without the consent of all parties. At the strategic level, these operations will be executed impartially. However, at the tactical level, those who oppose interference in the conflict are most unlikely to consider the actions impartial. Thus, the peace-support force could face a war-like situation. On the other hand, peace-enforcement differs from war in that military victory is not necessarily the ultimate measure of success.

The above catalogue of operations ranges from the lower to the upper limits of the broad interpretation of the Petersberg tasks. Interestingly, operations at the lower end, such as humanitarian assistance, may in special cases be more demanding than operations in the higher segment of the Petersberg tasks, such as first-generation peacekeeping. Time and distance are two dimensions of military operations that have become more important over the last ten years. A timely response and the ability to operate far from the own territory without host support demand rapidly deployable forces and strategic transport in combination with logistical support lines over a great distance.

Many essential capabilities, such as communications, command-and-control and information networks, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, are required not only for high-risk but also for lower-risk operations.

Since Europe is supposed to contribute to the whole range of operations as identified in this catalogue, redressing deficiencies in the above-mentioned areas should be most welcome. However, the lessons from the last ten years show that special emphasis has to be given to those missions that are closely related to European interests in and around the own continent. Although the present developments in the European Union are often described as a leap forward, Europe must not overestimate its potential. As far as conducting autonomous military operations is concerned, Europe should first learn to walk before it may try to run. Hence, the focus should be on humanitarian assistance, preventive deployment as part of a policy of conflict prevention on or near the European continent, and limited peace-enforcing operations. This functional approach has shed some light on the limits of the Petersberg tasks. But more is needed to define the missions as envisaged in the documents of the Cologne and Helsinki Summits. A further, additional look at the European security interests, from a geographical perspective, may unveil more about the European aspirations covered under the trio of Petersberg tasks.

4 The Petersberg Tasks: a geographical approach

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Petersberg tasks encompass the full range of conceivable military challenges and contingencies, short of dealing with major strategic threats to the home territories of European countries:

1) humanitarian and rescue tasks; 2) peacekeeping tasks; and 3) tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace enforcement.¹³ In most cases, from a military point of view the first tasks are clearly far less demanding than the latter, which indeed may require the deployment of substantial armed forces outside the national borders of the participating nations. The aforementioned Capabilities Commitment Conference will ask EU member states to provide national units for a corps-sized European force, with a smaller rapid reaction element for instant action. With a force of this size, European states may be expected to carry out *limited* peace-enforcement operations, i.e., operations of a size not above that of the ongoing KFOR operation in Kosovo. Especially the bottlenecks in strategic lift capabilities (both air- and sea-borne) do impose substantial constraints on these states' ability to project military power to regions at large distance from the European heartland.

At the same time, the risks emanating from enforcement operations with high-intensity warfare are likely to caution European governments not to commit troops in areas of conflict where 'they have no dog in the fight'. On the other hand, these governments may feel the natural duty to protect their nationals finding themselves in trouble in other continents or the moral compulsion to stop massive violations of human rights and other humanitarian tragedies, particularly in former colonies. Also, they may be called upon to contribute to classical peacekeeping operations that seek to supervise peace (or cease-fire) agreements and to disengage (former) hostile forces.

13) In the official text of the WEU Council of Ministers' Petersberg Declaration of June 1992 the word 'peace making' was used.

These operations tend to entail small risks, and do not require the massing of robust military forces. For a more detailed overview of different military operations, see the previous chapter.

Layers of interest

One might envisage a model of three concentric circles around the 'hard core' of EU territory, defining the geographical space for the different categories of military tasks and corresponding military operations to be carried out under particular circumstances. Critical is the delineation of the *first circle*, i.e., EU's extended security space where EU-led enforcement operations may be staged because *essential* European interests are at stake. Essential interests are interests that pertain to the overall stability in the wider regional system and, as such, they have to be distinguished from so-called *core* or *vital* interests. The latter are bearing on the immediate survival of national societies. In all likelihood, EU countries are, at least for the foreseeable future, only able to secure their vital interests in close military co-operation with the United States in the framework of NATO. At any rate, this is the official position of all European NATO members, including France.

In contrast with vital interests, essential interests are related to more remote dangers and indirect threats. One might think of the risk of external interstate conflicts spilling over to the territories of EU members, of civil wars causing a mass exodus of refugees towards one of more EU members, and of hostile groups violently interrupting the flow of raw materials and/or indispensable commodities from areas European economies are heavily dependent on. These interests need not be (fully) shared by the US and, for this reason, the pursuance of these interests constitutes the main rationale for the build-up of a European military capacity for autonomous action. Contrary to what is sometimes suggested on the other side of the Atlantic, it is not resentment over US power in the world that drives European countries toward this goal but rather their fear that American power will not always be available should the need arise.

Next to vital and essential interests, there is a third level of interests that may be called *general* or *subsidiary* interests. They are concerned with the protection of universal human values, the promotion of international law, and the quest for world peace. These are interests for whose defence most national governments are not prepared to make ultimate sacrifices; nevertheless, they are held in high regard (at least rhetorically) as they feature prominently in the foreign policy of nearly all civilised nations. The interests concerned serve to justify participation in peacekeeping and other low-risk operations, such as peace building and the commitment of police forces to maintain domestic order.

First circle

How should one delimit the geographical space where essential EU interests have to be protected? This space roughly converges with the arch stretching from the Baltic states over the Balkans to Europe's South Eastern (Turkey) and Southern flanks (Mediterranean and Northern Africa). It covers countries that are likely to join the European Union in due course as well as countries that probably will never become a member of the Union. But the latter have to be considered intrinsic parts of EU's security space too, because conflicts and tensions in the areas concerned contain serious risks of producing disruptive effects on internal conditions in EU countries. Since formal security guarantees to the countries belonging to the security space are out of the question, the European Union must keep its freedom of manoeuvre by acting pragmatically rather than automatically. On the other hand, it is not in the Union's interest to create the impression of a second-rate security area, particularly not vis-à-vis future member states. The best way for the European Union to deal with this problem is to underpin its implicit commitment to the security space as a whole by deepening economic, political, societal and military links.¹⁴

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that external developments are likely to affect these countries' interests in varying degrees. For example, France would be much more exposed to political turbulence in Algeria than the Scandinavian EU members. Conversely, unlike the Southern European EU members, the Scandinavian member states might be dragged into tensions of the Baltic region. From this basic political reality, one may derive the conclusion that EU members' security concerns and priorities will to a large extent be conditioned by geographical proximity. This conclusion justifies, in particular cases, the formation of coalitions of the able and willing, reflecting the prevalence of interests that may not be shared by *all* EU member states at the same critical level. A recent French suggestion to establish a special rapid reaction corps to be composed of forces from South European countries for the purpose of controlling crises in the Mediterranean regions underscores this point. As a matter of course, the Middle East and the Gulf region, in particular, are strategically and economically essential to Europe's future. However, given the convergence of European and North American interests that can be found here, one may suspect that most contingencies in this area require joint action with the United States.

14) For this point see Karl Kaiser, 'Challenges and contingencies for European defence policy, in Laurence Martin and John Roper (eds.), *Towards a common defence policy* (Paris: WEU Institute for Security Studies, 1995), p. 31.

The European Union could enhance its security profile in the Gulf by seeking closer naval co-operation with the countries of the Gulf Co-operation Council.

Tensions in the Caucasus have proven, to date, not to affect essential interests of the Union's member states nor are they likely to do so in the future. Moreover, any independent military action in the Caucasus creates logistical problems of such a nature that EU members could hardly survive by themselves. Another big question mark is Ukraine. On the one hand, it should be clear that this country's plight and indeed its future survival in view of Russian irredentist aspirations cannot fail to deeply affect the position of Poland, likely to be one of EU's earliest newcomers. On the other hand, the mere dimension of Ukraine's problems will be too big to swallow for the Union alone. If NATO as a whole could not preserve Ukraine's independence, then certainly the EU would not be able to secure it. Finally, Belarus may be disregarded as a country in need of security links with the EU since it is barely more than a puppet of the Russian Federation.

Second circle

In the *second circle* EU countries may undertake peacekeeping operations, involving little or no violence, either as part of a strategy of conflict prevention or for monitoring peace settlements. In addition to Europe and the Middle East (peace settlement between Israel and Syria?), Africa might be considered as the natural *chasse gardée* or hunting ground for Europeans to carry out such operations. The goal of creating security in what is alleged as 'the hopeless continent'¹⁵ would lend substance to EU's ambition of assuming a more assertive role in global affairs. The point is that not the entire African continent is in desperate straits. Some African countries (*e.g.*, Kenya, Malawi and Botswana) have been successful in achieving economic progress and, to a lesser degree, advancing democratic development; other African countries have the potential to follow suit. At any rate, Africa seems to be the only continent outside Europe where well considered EU military action and support can make a political difference.

Apart from moral considerations, Europe has also a strategic interest in resisting temptations of indifference and neglect towards this continent. The chaos of so-called failed states creates safe havens for terrorists and international criminals who might hit European targets. The continuation of anarchy and poverty also increases the pressure of refugees knocking on Europe's doors. Several EU countries, being former colonial powers, have already demonstrated a special responsibility for particular African nations.

15) In these terms Africa was labelled in the cover title of *The Economist*, May 13th 2000.

Some of them (United Kingdom, France and Belgium) have frequently intervened with military means in African politics. There is a compelling case to be made for the *européanisation* of national policies by EU members towards African countries: joint European action could not only bring about greater effectiveness of foreign intervention but also avoid neo-colonial resentments taking root among African people.

This is not to suggest, though, that the European Union has to intervene in *all* interstate and intrastate conflicts in Africa. Indeed a large part of these conflicts may turn out to be intractable and not at all curable by means of outside intervention, while one must be aware of the risk that interventions, which start as low-risk operations may escalate to higher levels of violence. Nor is this a call for the Union to conduct peacekeeping operations entirely on their own in all cases. A sensible approach would be to help African forces run peacekeeping operations themselves.

That is to say: by a concerted effort EU countries could provide regional African forces with planning-and-command structures, advisors, intelligence, logistical equipment, training, and – last but not least – funds. The establishment of regional peacekeeping centres, in the form of joint (*i.e.*, Euro-African) ventures, deserves serious consideration.

Many African countries are caught in a poverty trap. While *absolute* levels of poverty and underdevelopment are poor predictors of the outbreak of violence, there is nevertheless an intimate relationship between conflict and poverty. Africa's wars are not driven just by ethnic differences, but these differences are exacerbated by poverty. Poverty, therefore, constitutes one of the root causes of conflicts. Conflicts, in turn, prolong poverty at enormous cost. Therefore, a comprehensive strategy should be developed, with the right mix of military and non-military components, such as financial and technical assistance, aimed at preventing armed conflicts and violence rather than redressing them. One of the basic requirements for such a strategy is the co-ordination of EU's policies in the first (communitarian) and second (intergovernmental) pillar. The prevention of armed conflicts would moreover be facilitated by the further development of early-warning mechanisms through the pooling of information resources from governmental and non-governmental actors.

As regards the latter, experience would suggest that one of the main obstacles on the road towards conflict prevention is represented by the fact that 'the urgent always drives out the important'. In other words: the preoccupation of political leaders with pressing problems in the here-and-now prevents them from focusing their attention on long-range, structural issues that may or may not erupt in bloodshed. Overcoming the passive attitudes that usually prevail in official circles is not easy, the more so since in some cases a posture of aloofness and the concomitant policy of non-intervention cannot be ruled out as the lesser of all evils.

But the policymakers' sense of urgency about tensions in particular areas that are most likely to escalate to the level of armed conflicts in the near future might be strengthened by holding regular public debates on the basis of situation reports to be issued by the European Commission. The European Parliament could play a leading role in offering a platform to non-governmental organisations and interest groups in general to share relevant information about imminent threats of humanitarian crises.

Third circle

The *third circle* need not have geographical limitations. This means that the European Union, if necessary, might conduct humanitarian and rescue operations around the world or assist other nations, for instance in Asia and Latin America, in doing so. Citizens from nearly all EU member states are working, staying or travelling across the entire globe. Their lives could be endangered in the event of violent revolutions or terrorist movements in non-European territories may turn against foreigners, Europeans in particular. Under the Treaty on the European Union, European governments are obliged to protect each other's nationals.

Practical possibilities of rescuing or evacuating European citizens in distress from far-away crisis areas largely depend on the presence of naval ships in the vicinity of these areas or on the availability of local airports suitable for the landing of military detachments from forward bases. It makes sense for European governments to create a common pool of military and civilian capabilities to perform humanitarian and rescue tasks in all continents. This pool might also be useful in sustaining relief operations in areas stricken by non-man-made disasters, such as earthquakes, tornadoes or floods. Finally, the European Union must be ready to exchange experience and to share information with interested non-European countries in fields relating to conflict-prevention and peace-support operations.

5 Conclusion

Ever since the conclusion of the Treaty of Amsterdam, many lofty words have been devoted to the ambitions and aspirations of EU member states for pursuing a Common European Security and Defence Policy. Erstwhile scepticism has made room for cautious optimism about the chances of turning the CESDP project into a success. First priority must be the achievement of the Helsinki Headline Goal by the end of 2003. Yet, the assignment and earmarking of military capabilities, important though they are, are not sufficient. In parallel, a strategic concept has to be elaborated, linking military capabilities to political objectives and providing a rationale for the use of military force. Otherwise, European countries run the risk of being at a loss about what contingencies may call for particular interventions and how to conduct military operations should they decide to apply force.

It goes without saying that any workable strategic concept presupposes a political decision-making and military command structure being in place to allow for timely decisions and clear operational guidelines. In this paper several suggestions have been made for overcoming deficiencies and for preventing problems that may be anticipated in this regard. In defining the strategic concept for EU-led military actions it is necessary, first of all, to spell out the functional requirements for carrying out the so-called Petersberg tasks. A wide range of operations is covered under these tasks. With the notable exception of war fighting for collective defence, these tasks cover all sorts of conceivable missions, from low-risk to high-risk operations. But regardless of the risks associated with all kinds of operations, *any* particular operation may be very demanding. Humanitarian aid or preventive deployment might require a large number of military capabilities and, depending on the urgency and the distances involved, might call for means which are not available in sufficient numbers in the inventories of the European armed forces. This leads to the conclusion that Europe, at least for the time being, has to restrict itself and is well advised not to overplay its hand. The focus should be on humanitarian assistance, preventive deployment as part of a policy of conflict prevention and *limited*, KFOR-style peace-enforcing operations.

Some basic elements for a Strategic Concept are to be derived from the answers to the questions of *when, where and how* these operations may be carried out. First, the European Union is likely to consider responsibility for taking military action whenever its *interests and values* are challenged by violent nations or groups. These interests and values may not be always shared by the United States. Also, threat and risk assessments between European capitals and Washington may differ. As a consequence, in such a situation action by NATO as a whole might not be possible. However, the interests and values the EU has subscribed to do not belong to the same category; there are different layers or levels of interest. It is useful to distinguish between *vital, essential* and *general* interests. Secondly, a geographical approach may help us to identify the *regions* where particular interests are at stake, and may warrant intervention of a special kind. Once again, in view of their modest capabilities, European countries have to be highly selective. In other words: they must make strategic choices.

A model of three concentric circles around the European mainland has been presented to describe the geographical space for the different categories of military tasks and corresponding military operations. Of great importance is the first circle in which EU-led peace-enforcement operations may be staged because essential European interests, short of national survival, are threatened. This first circle converges with the arch stretching from the Baltic states to Europe's South Eastern (Turkey) and Southern flanks (Mediterranean and North Africa). A wider, second circle focuses on situations in which peacekeeping operations involving little or no violence can be carried out with a view to prevent conflict or to monitor peace agreements. This wider space covers not only Europe and the Middle East, but also Africa where Europe has a strategic interest in resisting temptations of indifference and neglect. Both for reasons of effectiveness and for reasons of forestalling neo-colonial sentiments, there is a compelling case to make for an Europeanisation of national policies by EU members towards African countries. A sensible approach in this war-ridden continent is to help African forces run peacekeeping operations themselves as much as possible. Africa's wars do not only have ethnic causes. Poverty, too, fuels the differences and conflicts of interest on this continent. Any European military involvement can therefore only be part of a broader approach in which non-military components, such as early-warning mechanisms, economic emergency and structural adjustment programmes, are well integrated.

The third and last circle has no geographical boundaries. This means that the European Union, if necessary, might conduct humanitarian and rescue operations around the world. It would be sensible for European governments to create a common pool of military and civilian capabilities to perform humanitarian and rescue tasks in all continents. In addition to setting geographic priorities, *criteria and benchmarks* should be identified that have to be taken into consideration before any proper and careful decision can be made on launching an operation.

This concerns the third basic element of a Strategic Concept. One may think of familiar yardsticks like the legal grounds for the operation, the adequacy of the UN Security Council mandate, political support for the operation, the likelihood of military success, the commitment of the (former) warring parties to a peace or truce agreement, the regional political setting of the operation, physical and other obstacles to be overcome in the military theatre, etc. Arguably, a common Framework of Assessment along these lines can be helpful by sorting out the advantages, disadvantages and risks of military operations in particular countries or regions.

With these three basic elements on the table, it should be possible to describe the strategic rationale and main tasks of a Common European Security and Defence Policy. But there is reason to add another, a fourth basic element to the Strategic Concept. European military planners are badly in need of *guidelines for the force structure and force planning* of EU's military capacity for autonomous action. In the European Union, with the four largest countries spending more than 75 percent of the total of defence expenditures (as against fourteen percent of the combined total for the nine smallest), there are numerous differences between the national armed forces in terms of their size, composition and orientation. These differences are even more highlighted by the fact that about half of the EU member countries have decided to restructure their armed forces toward professional all-volunteer armies whilst the other half is still retaining conscription. With the United Kingdom and France moving quite fast to complete the modernisation of their armed forces, the Netherlands, for instance, will reach that stage in 2009. By contrast, Belgium, Spain, Germany and Italy are likely to pass that milestone even later, well into the next decade. Harmonisation, synchronisation and convergence over such a long period of time were to be highly desirable. A European Defence White Paper could provide EU member states with a wide range of possibilities to remedy deficiencies and to eliminate or at least to reduce significantly overlaps and redundancies as well as to explore possible avenues for co-operation and combined efforts.

Between now and the year 2003, an ambitious agenda will steer deliberations on a Common European Security and Defence Policy. In less than two years, EU member states will have to accomplish a Herculean task. While stating their political ambitions and revealing their strategic objectives they must build a military capacity which is sufficient both quantitatively and qualitatively, in tandem with tailoring a political decision-making and military command structure being able to carry out a truly Common European Security and Defence Policy under difficult circumstances. It is in this perspective that the above recommendations are being made.

Nederlandstalige Samenvatting

De Europese Unie ontwikkelt stap voor stap een gezamenlijk Europees veiligheids- en defensiebeleid (EVDB). In maart 2000 werd daarvoor de institutionele grondslag gelegd met de instelling van een aantal interim-organen, zoals het Comité voor Politieke en Veiligheidsvraagstukken, het Militair Comité en de Militaire Staf. Momenteel wordt gewerkt aan de modaliteiten van de samenwerking tussen de Europese Unie en de NAVO, en tussen de Europese Unie en de niet tot de EU behorende bondgenoten en toetredingslanden. Verder wordt een op 20 november 2000 te houden conferentie voorbereid waarop de lidstaten hun bijdragen aan de vorig jaar overeengekomen Europese militaire capaciteit van een troepenmacht van zo'n 60.000 militairen bekend maken.

Wat tot nu toe ontbreekt, is een strategisch concept dat een brug slaat tussen de Europese militaire capaciteit en de politieke ambities die aan het EVDB ten grondslag liggen. In zo'n concept komen vragen aan de orde over de omstandigheden waaronder en het geografische bereik waarbinnen Europese militaire middelen kunnen worden ingezet, wat voor soort operaties de Europese Unie kan uitvoeren én hoe zulke operaties worden uitgevoerd.

Zonder zo'n strategisch concept zal het de Europese Unie veel moeite kosten om overeenstemming te bereiken over inzet van militaire middelen in conflict- en noodsituaties. Het gebrek aan een strategisch concept bevordert evenmin de vaststelling van de afzonderlijke elementen van een 'Helsinki Headline Goal' van 50-60.000 militairen, vijftien brigades, met de hierbij horende zee- en luchtmacht en voorzieningen wat commandovoering, inlichtingenvergaring, strategisch transport en logistieke ondersteuning betreft. Zolang onduidelijk is waar, wanneer en hoe de Europese Unie van haar militaire capaciteit gebruik wenst te maken zijn de vooruitzichten voor een goede werkverdeling met de NAVO verre van optimaal. Tenslotte kan een strategisch concept dienen als richtsnoer voor de militaire planning van de Europese lidstaten en een taakverdeling tussen deze landen vergemakkelijken.

Politieke besluitvorming in het kader van militaire operaties

Een militaire capaciteit, bestaande uit 15 brigades, is onbruikbaar als de Europese Unie niet beschikt over een besluitvormingsmechanisme om tijdig en adequaat de vereiste besluiten te nemen.

Het is de vraag of het huidige institutionele 'acquis', zoals vastgelegd in de EU-Verdragen, daarvoor voldoende ondergrond biedt. De Europese Gemeenschap en haar instellingen zijn indertijd primair opgericht voor interne politieke en economische doeleinden. De externe politiek bleef hoofdzakelijk beperkt tot handel, hulp, associatie en uitbreiding. Structuur en instellingen van de Europese Unie zijn niet goed toegerust voor externe militaire machtsprojectie. In haar politieke structuur en cultuur verschilt de Europese Unie hemelsbreed van het Noord-Atlantisch bondgenootschap. Hierdoor heeft de Europese Unie in militair opzicht verschillende handicaps.

Allereerst waren verantwoordelijkheden van de Europese Unie op veiligheids- en defensiegebied lange tijd taboe. Pas in het Verdrag van Maastricht werd over de ontwikkeling van een 'gemeenschappelijke defensie' gesproken. Nochtans duurde het bijna tien jaar voordat de 15 lidstaten overeenstemming bereikten over een 'bescheiden' militaire capaciteit, die niet meer dan tien procent van de totale militaire inspanning van de EU-lidstaten omvat.

In de tweede plaats heeft het GBVB raakvlakken met het communautaire stelsel, waardoor bijvoorbeeld de Europese Commissie 'fully associated [is] with the work carried out in the common foreign and security policy field'. Hoe zich dat verdraagt met de praktische vereisten voor besluitvorming in het kader van crisisbeheersing is de vraag. Hetzelfde geldt voor de rol van het Europese Parlement en het Europese Hof van Justitie.

In de derde plaats is het roulerende voorzitterschap een complicerende factor. Voor veel kleinere landen is het voorzitterschap een zware taak, die in crisissituaties nog meer van hen zou eisen. Voor effectieve crisisbeheersing is zo'n wisselende aansturing fnuikend.

Ten slotte is het gemeenschappelijk buitenlands en veiligheidsbeleid erg flexibel van opzet. De Tweede Pijler biedt voor de individuele lidstaten tal van aanknopingspunten om niet mee te doen met een gemeenschappelijk militair optreden van de Vijftien. Het nadeel is dat hiermee de mogelijkheid wordt geboden zich afzijdig te houden of zelfs te onttrekken aan de besluitvorming in gezamenlijk kader. Dit doet afbreuk aan de geloofwaardigheid van de Europese Unie bij crisisbeheersing. Een mogelijke uitweg is de vorming van een 'ad hoc comité' van die Europese lidstaten die in een voorkomende crisis daadwerkelijk actie willen ondernemen met een politiek mandaat van de Raad.

Op den duur valt overigens aan een volledige herziening van Titel V niet te ontkomen, wil politieke verdeeldheid in dit soort kwesties op het niveau van de Raad van Ministers worden vermeden. Het comité voor politieke en veiligheidsvraagstukken zou een grotere rol kunnen vervullen en meer bevoegdheden kunnen krijgen. Ook hiervoor zijn verdragswijzigingen onontbeerlijk.

De commandostructuur voor militaire operaties

Voor elke succesvolle, omvangrijke militaire operatie is een goed functionerende commandostructuur onontbeerlijk. Het uitvoeren van zo'n operatie met vijftien of meer democratische landen lijkt een 'contradictio in terminis'. Anders dan de NAVO, kent de Europese Unie geen lidstaat die over een zo grote militaire en politieke overmacht beschikt dat aan dat land als vanzelfsprekend het leiderschap bij de uitvoering van gecompliceerde operaties wordt toegekend. Binnen de Europese Unie zou zo'n leiderschapsrol kunnen toevallen aan Frankrijk en Duitsland die op velerlei gebied binnen de Europese Unie als aandrijfas hebben gefungeerd. Maar voor zover er nog veel over is van deze stimulerende en initiërende rol vertoont deze Frans-Duitse as op defensiegebied zwakke plekken. Frankrijk heeft binnen de NAVO een aparte status en neemt niet deel aan de geïntegreerde defensiesamenwerking. Duitsland kent pas sinds kort een wat minder terughoudende rol waar het gaat om militair optreden buiten het verdragsgebied. De Bundeswehr is vooralsnog niet in staat aan zo'n leidende rol substantieel bij te dragen. De vorming van een uit drie of vier landen bestaand directoraat komt de effectiviteit van de besluitvorming wellicht ten goede, maar verdraagt zich slecht met het gezamenlijke karakter van het Europese veiligheids- en defensiebeleid, waarbij per definitie alle EU-lidstaten een volwaardige stem hebben.

Omdat de Europese Unie niet voornemens is al in NAVO-verband aanwezige voorzieningen te dupliceren is het raadzaam voor de commandovoering bestaande, aan de NAVO toebedeelde NAVO-hoofdkwartieren te gebruiken. Zo'n aanpak kent tal van voordelen en kan –althans deels- tegemoetkomen aan de bij de Europese Unie inherente zwakheden bij de operationele aansturing en politieke leiding. Veel EU-lidstaten zijn bekend met de procedures en afspraken in bondgenootschappelijk verband, hetzij als lidstaat hetzij als deelnemer aan het Partnership for Peace-programma. Als een crisis ontstaat, zal het geruime tijd duren voordat duidelijkheid bestaat over de leiding van de operatie. Met de aanwijzing van een hoofdkwartier, dat zowel in NAVO- als in EU-verband kan worden gebruikt, wordt bij de voorbereiding van zo'n missie geen onnodig tijdverlies opgelopen.

Met zo'n aanpak worden ook nog twee andere problemen bij de commandovoering verholpen. Het gebruik van zulke voorzieningen in bondgenootschappelijk én in Europees verband vergemakkelijkt het stellen van algemeen aanvaarde normen voor de geschiktheid en gereedheid van in te zetten eenheden uit de verschillende landen. Daarnaast is te voorzien dat de verschillende landen ter beschikking te stellen eenheden en middelen pas aan een commandant van een multinationaal hoofdkwartier zullen overdragen, nadat de eigen, nationale besluitvorming over deelname is afgerond. Dat kan de nodige tijd vergen. Bij het gebruik van een bestaande commandostructuur beschikt de commandant van een multinationaal hoofdkwartier over voldoende kennis over de bijdragen van de verschillende landen om dit tijdverlies te compenseren en al met voorbereidingen te beginnen in afwachting van definitieve nationale toezeggingen.

Een bijkomstig voordeel van het gebruik van bestaande, gezamenlijke voorzieningen is dat daarmee de weg kan worden gebaad naar 'role-specialisation' en 'pooling' van middelen op die gebieden die voor de inzet in operaties slechts in beperkte mate bij de afzonderlijke landen aanwezig zijn. Een ander middel om de samenhang tussen de EU-lidstaten te vergroten is de ontwikkeling van een gezamenlijk 'toetsingskader' met criteria en aandachtspunten voor de besluitvorming over militaire inzet. Idealiter zou de nog in te stellen raad van ministers van Defensie hierbij een belangrijke rol kunnen vervullen. Deze raad zou door de opstelling van een Europees Defensiewitboek de aanzet kunnen geven voor een verdere harmonisering van de afzonderlijke defensie-inspanningen.

Een functionele benadering van de Petersberg-taken

De in Petersberg op 19 juni 1992 overeengekomen taken, humanitaire hulp en redding, vredesbewaring en taken voor gevechtseenheden, met inbegrip van vredesafdwinging, kunnen verschillend worden geïnterpreteerd. Met uitzondering van de collectieve verdedigingstaak, beslaat hun beschrijving het geheel aan alle denkbare missies, van operaties met lage risico's tot inzet met hoge risico's. Maar ook los van het risico dat aan een bepaald missietype is verbonden, kunnen de praktische vereisten voor de verschillende soorten inzet bijzonder hoog zijn. Humanitaire hulp of preventieve ontplooiing kan de inzet van grote aantallen militairen met zich meebrengen en kan, afhankelijk van de te overbruggen afstand en de met de uitvoering van de operatie gemoeid gaande tijdsdruk, beslag leggen op middelen waarover de Europese landen op afzienbare termijn nog niet beschikken. Dit leidt tot de conclusie dat Europa zich vooralsnog beperkingen moet opleggen en zich moet richten op humanitaire hulp, preventieve ontplooiing en beperkte vredesoperaties, zoals thans in Kosovo.

Een geografische benadering van de Petersberg-taken

Sommige basiselementen voor een strategisch concept kunnen worden ontleend aan de drie vragen naar het *wanneer*, het *waar* en het *hoe* tot militaire inzet moet worden besloten. In de eerste plaats zal de Europese Unie een bepaalde verantwoordelijkheid op zich moeten nemen *wanneer* haar belangen en waarden worden bedreigd door gewelddadige regimes en groepen. Zulke belangen en waarden hoeven niet altijd te sporen met de Amerikaanse en niet altijd hoeft sprake te zijn van een gelijke inschatting van zulke dreigingen in Europese en in Amerikaanse ogen. Als gevolg hiervan kan een situatie ontstaan waarin de NAVO niet in haar geheel zal willen optreden. Voor een goede begripsvorming is het in dit verband nodig onderscheid te maken tussen vitale, essentiële en algemene belangen.

De tweede vraag *waar* Europa tot militaire inzet zal besluiten hangt vervolgens af van de mate waarin zulke Europese belangen in het geding zijn. Daarvoor kunnen drie geografische, concentrische cirkels rondom het Europese vasteland worden getrokken. In de eerste concentrische cirkel, die van de Baltische staten via het zuidoostelijke deel van Europa (Turkije) naar de zuidelijke flank van ons continent (Middellands Zeegebied en Noord-Afrika) loopt, rechtvaardigt de dreiging van essentiële Europese belangen, dat wil zeggen alle mogelijke bedreigingen met uitzondering van een rechtstreekse bedreiging van het eigen grondgebied, de inzet onder Europese leiding van een vredesafdwingende operatie.

Een tweede, wijdere cirkel beslaat situaties waarin met weinig of geen geweldsgebruik vredesbewarende operaties kunnen worden uitgevoerd met het oog op conflictpreventie en het controleren van de naleving van vredesakkoorden en staakt-het-vuren. Deze wijdere cirkel omvat niet alleen Europa en het Midden-Oosten, maar ook Afrika, waar Europa zich niet onverschillig en nalatig zou mogen opstellen. Europa zou Afrika gezamenlijk te hulp moeten schieten om de talloze conflicten op dat continent te beëindigen en de oorzaken daarvan, die niet alleen op ethisch gebied liggen, maar waaraan ook armoede debet is, weg te nemen. Europese militaire betrokkenheid zou dan ook inpasbaar moeten zijn in een veel bredere aanpak, waarin ook non-militaire middelen en methodieken een rol vervullen.

De laatste cirkel kent geen geografische begrenzingen. Dit betekent dat de Europese Unie zonodig waar ook ter wereld humanitaire hulpoperaties en reddingsacties moet kunnen uitvoeren.

De derde vraag, die in een strategisch concept beantwoord moet worden, betreft de wijze waarop (*hoe*) tot militaire inzet wordt besloten. Hiervoor moeten in een gezamenlijk toetsingskader overeengekomen criteria en aandachtspunten worden vastgelegd. De legitimiteit van inzet, met name de wenselijkheid van een VN-mandaat, de kans op militair succes, de medewerking van de oorlogvoerende partijen en de politieke steun voor zo'n operatie in de deelnemende landen kunnen belangrijke toetsstenen zijn.

Met deze drie basiselementen voor een strategisch concept kan verder worden gewerkt aan de formulering van de strategische visie op en de belangrijkste taken van het gemeenschappelijke Europese veiligheids- en defensiebeleid. De ontwikkeling van het concept is compleet als ook een vierde basiselement, richtlijnen voor de opzet van de benodigde Europese militaire capaciteit en in het verlengde daarvan de defensieplanning in deze strategische visie wordt opgenomen.

About the Authors

Alfred van Staden is Director of the Netherlands Institute for International Relations 'Clingendael', The Hague, and (part-time) professor of international relations at Leiden University.

Kees Homan is a senior research fellow at the 'Clingendael' Institute. He is a retired major general of the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps.

Bert Kreemers is a senior research fellow at the 'Clingendael' Institute. He is on secondment from the Netherlands Ministry of Defence.

Alfred Pijpers is a senior research fellow at the 'Clingendael' Institute and a senior lecturer at the Department of Political Science at Leiden University.

Rob de Wijk is a senior research fellow at the 'Clingendael' Institute. He is also professor of international relations at the Royal Military Academy in Breda and professor of strategic studies at Leiden University.