

European Security - Sharks and Minnows off Helsinki

Towards the EU-Summit in Finland

Introduction

The European Union, an organization that has to date managed to peacefully unite 15 nations through non-military means, is now keen to adopt military crisis management capacities in addition to non-military alternatives. The EU's involvement in crisis management was first introduced in the Amsterdam Treaty in the framework of the Petersberg Tasks¹. The speed at which the EU has forged ahead with its military ambitions has been surprising for this notoriously slow organization and it does not seem about to let up.

When the European Council meets in Helsinki next week military crisis management capabilities will come up against non-military capabilities as the Union determines its priorities in this field. In the one corner, the Finnish Presidency has prepared, alongside its draft presidency progress report on CFSP, a *Draft for the Presidency Report on Non-Military Crisis Management of the European Union* which places the emphasis on the development of effective non-military crisis response tools within the European Union. In the opposite corner, Europe's big guns - France, Germany, Great Britain and Italy - who, meeting in Paris on Tuesday, 30 November, have agreed on a joint proposal to the Helsinki European Council stressing the development of a military plan of action for European Union crisis response². Their "toolbox" paper covers military bodies, military planning and

operational command and control. It remains classified. The bigger European nations also pushed the Finnish Presidency hard to put substantial emphasis in its report on military crisis management

There is a very real danger that the four big guns will ride roughshod over the non-military proposals and force through a military dominated European Union crisis management policy - a situation that BITS has warned against from the beginning of this debate. An autonomous European crisis management capacity that places an equal priority on both a capable military structure and on non-military capacities would provide a crisis management structure that would not only be a valuable alternative to NATO, but also a valuable supplement. A European crisis management capacity focusing mainly on military instruments would be particularly unfortunate as the EU, to date a purely civilian organization, has been in a far stronger position to undertake non-military crisis management than NATO - an organization whose thinking often seems totally confined to its military toolbox. Focusing EU crisis management on military instruments would do little more than poorly duplicate NATO.

The European Union, as indicated by the Finnish Presidency's draft report, has already developed an impressive array of non-military crisis management and conflict prevention tools, which with the support and guidance

proposed by the Finns, could be transformed into an effective and constructive mechanism. The Union, on the other hand, never having been a military organization is poorly equipped in this regard, and is going to need substantial investment before it can make a military machine of its own operational. The big guns are determined to develop an autonomous European military capacity that can operate independently of NATO and intervene in conflicts where NATO (read USA) either fears to tread, or is not interested. This determination isn't making the Alliance's big brother, the United States, particularly happy. Former US national security advisor, Brent Scowcroft, leveled stern criticism against the development of an autonomous European military capacity, saying that Europe is wasting money because a strong military capacity is already available under NATO³. Following the war in Kosovo the US has criticized the Europeans for failing to pull their weight in the NATO military operation. NATO's military commander during the Kosovo war, Gen. Wesley Clark, addressed this issue saying that alliance solidarity was being challenged because the notion of shared burden was not being met. Clark said that in Yugoslavia the United States had carried far too heavy a burden and were leagues ahead of the other alliance members in all fields, including intelligence. US forces sent around 800 Aircraft to fight the Kosovo war, double the amount sent by the rest of the NATO states combined⁴. US aircraft were reported to have flown over 70% of the missions⁵. The Americans believe that Europe should concentrate on becoming more effective partners within the Alliance, spending more for the Alliance, before concentrating on what they perceive to be the development of structures that are in direct competition to NATO. At the core of the US expectations the European members of NATO are required to spend on NATO controlled capabilities, not on capabilities they control themselves. The emerging European consensus, however, envisages these future strategic capabilities coming under the control of the European Union, thus developing them into a bargaining chip whenever Europe has to negotiate the strategies and tactics for future military crisis management with its transatlantic partners. This reflects the different lessons learned from Kosovo.

The Hardware

The guiding principles of the EU summit in Cologne called for the creation of an EU

capacity for autonomous action backed up by credible military capabilities and appropriate decision making bodies. The focus of the debate has to date been on the development of these military capabilities. The European Union has been preparing itself for a military role for some time now, adopting an ever closer relationship with the Western European Union (WEU), Western Europe's security organization. The Amsterdam Treaty provided the EU with access to this organization's capacities and capabilities in order to act within the realm of the Petersberg Tasks. The Amsterdam Treaty introduced the possibility of integrating the WEU into the European Union, should the European Council so decide⁶. During the past 12 months this option has been explored, and the Cologne summit declaration set a date of the end of 2000 to finally take decisions. The WEU seems, however, to have jumped the gun, and following its Luxembourg Council of Ministers in November, has now already been *de facto* partially integrated into the European Union. In the declaration the WEU Ministers declared their willingness to allow bodies of the Council of the European Union direct access, as required, to the expertise of the organization's operational structures, including the WEU Secretariat, the Military Staff, the Satellite Center and the Institute for Security Studies⁷. The result being that the EU member states now have full and equal access to the WEU without first having settled all the problems that were associated with the WEU's institutional integration into the EU – particularly a role for the WEU's associate members and observers.

To crown this development the European Union's high representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, was also appointed secretary general of the WEU.

More than issuing a second hat to Mr. Solana, it brings CFSP and the WEU together under Mr. Solana's burgeoning hat. Mr. Solana is the first to hold this position and is therefore free to mould it. His role contains both, facets of a foreign minister and facets of a defense minister. By placing Solana in charge of both the WEU and the CFSP, effectively overseeing the EU's military and foreign policy developments, the position is already somewhat heavily leaning in the direction of that of a defense minister.

The Luxembourg WEU Council of Ministers also presented the results of an *Audit of Assets and Capabilities for European Crisis Management Operations*⁸ that was initiated following the

WEU Ministers meeting in Rome in November 1998. The results of the audit *show that Europeans, in principle, have the available force levels and resources needed to prepare and implement military operations over the whole range of Petersberg tasks.* It identified a number of gaps and deficiencies, however, where *these European assets and capabilities should be strengthened to attain a higher level of operational effectiveness in crisis management.* The report identified the most urgent efforts to be focused on:

- With regard to collective capabilities:
 - Strategic intelligence;
 - Strategic planning
- With regard to forces and operation capabilities:
 - Availability, deployability, strategic mobility, sustainability, survivability and interoperability and operational effectiveness;
 - Multinational, joint Operation and Force HQs, with particular reference to C3 (command, control and communications) capabilities and deployability of Force HQs.

The European Union's big guns are already one step ahead in this capacity build-up. At the first joint meeting of the EU's foreign and defense ministers the German defense minister, Rudolf Scharping, expressed the hope that the process of integrating a security policy dimension into the EU be completed by 2002 or 2003⁹. For Scharping and his colleagues in Britain, France and Italy, the quicker an EU security policy becomes operational, the better. The UK has already suggested a "headline goal" to reorganize the European crisis reaction forces into a corps which, by 2003, could conduct crisis operations within 60 days and maintain them for up to two years. This would require earmarking a minimum of 150,000 troops. The Eurocorps is already on the road to change with the participating nations agreeing to transform it into a European rapid reaction corps similar to NATO's ARRC. This corps will be restructured over four years. France and Germany already have more in store for the Eurocorps: They have suggested the Eurocorps assume command of the KFOR troops, currently stationed in Kosovo, already in the coming year.¹⁰ Again it is France and Germany who suggested the creation of a European Air Transport Command.

Decisions on how to finance these developments have not yet been taken. The Amsterdam Treaty does not allow the EU members to jointly procure military hardware

from EU resources. Defense procurement has to come from national defense budgets. However, beyond coordinating national procurement plans, some defense ministers have already obviously targeted the EU for future R&D projects and procurement programs, which can be labeled "dual use".

Decisive Alternatives

In Helsinki the European Union will take more steps towards developing a military capacity for crisis management than most observers expected. The Finnish Presidency must be careful to push forward its proposal for developing parallel non-military crisis management structures that are given *equal* importance. Sweden may prove to be the Presidency's strongest ally. Stockholm announced it will agree to the establishment of a permanent Military Committee within the EU only on the condition that a Permanent Committee on non-military crisis management be established in parallel. However, the risk is that the big guns, with their emphasis on military proposals, will pull the EU away from the Union's non-military alternatives, wherein lie its greatest possible strengths, and the very qualities that have united the Union internally.

A European Union crisis management capacity that contains a balance of military and non-military crisis management structures will provide Europe with an instrument that can truly live up to its potential. Non-military structures, like military ones, can only be effective if they are taken seriously and are invested with sufficient resources, something that has to date not happened in Europe. A situation where the European Union finances post-conflict conflict prevention, such as the Stability Pact, from its normal budget – while allocating additional funds to the development of military crisis management– is sending the wrong signal.

The challenge that lies ahead for the European Council in Helsinki is to develop an autonomous European security capacity that can operate swiftly and effectively during crisis situations. An effective capacity needs to be well balanced, giving the military and non-military components equal priority and resources. A European security capacity that leans too heavily towards its military components will sacrifice its comparative advantage contained in its non-military structures and capacities and go into direct competition with as well as duplication of NATO, while a European crisis management capability restrained to non-military means

will remain dominated by NATO and not allow for autonomous European action.

In addition the European Union is facing some more far reaching alternatives. While taking on autonomous crisis management tasks European nations will have to take a clear stand on whether they will clearly bind their crisis management operations to mandates issued by either the United Nations Security Council or the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. This would significantly re-strengthen the role of both international organizations and signal an approach different from both the US and NATO's policy. NATO during the Kosovo crisis and the Washington Summit resisted accepting a requirement of this type. However, EU statements to the effect of acting "in accordance with the principles of the UN-Charter" instead of "in accordance with the UN-Charter" already indicate a desire to allow for non-mandated operations, if circumstances should require.

Finally, the decision-making process of the European nations on these alternatives will strongly influence future relation between the EU and Russia. During the Cologne Summit the EU agreed its first "Common Strategy" for the CFSP. It dealt with EU-Russia relations and envisaged far ranging co-operation projects, which need to be implemented. One visionary aim "would be to work with Russia to develop joint foreign policy initiatives with regard to specific third countries and regions, to conflict prevention and to crisis management especially in areas adjacent to Russia, on the Balkans and the Middle East."¹¹ Within the document the EU also promises to consider "facilitating the participation of Russia, when the EU avails itself of the WEU for missions within the range of the Petersberg tasks."¹² It is hard to imagine that these far reaching initiatives will lead to success unless the EU's crisis management approach is clearly different from NATO's.

Endnotes

¹ These include humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking.

² *Berlin, Paris, London und Rom einig über EU-Militärstrukturen*, AFP, 30 November 1999.

³ Schlagabtausch zwischen Frankreich und USA zu Verteidigung in Europa, DPA, 04.11.1999.

⁴ Walker, David *Standing on our own feet* <http://www.guardianunlimited.co.uk> 14 May, 1999.

⁵ Sands, David R. *Talbot scolds European on their role in NATO* The Washington Times, 8 October, 1999.

⁶ Article 17 (ex Article J7) of the Amsterdam Treaty on European Union.

⁷ WEU Ministerial Council Luxembourg Declaration, Luxembourg, 23 November 1999 <http://www.weu.int/eng/comm/99-luxembourg.htm>

⁸ <http://www.weu.int/eng/mini/99luxembourg/recommendations.htm>

⁹ EU will sich in drei Jahren zum Krisenmanager mausern, AP news wire, 15.11.1999

¹⁰ Berlin, Paris, London und Rom einig über EU-Militärstrukturen, AFP, 30.1.1999.

¹¹ European Council, Common Strategy of the European Union on Russia, Cologne, 3/4.6.1999, p.26

¹² op. cit., p. 21

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