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‘Battle Groups’ to strengthen EU military crisis management?

The Franco-British duo has once more stepped up a gear on European defence with a new concept for rapid deployment ‘battle groups’. The concept is at the heart of a renewed impetus to implement the defence aspects of Solana’s EU Security Strategy, which includes a new Headline Goal (HG 2004-2010) being adopted at the European Council in June 2004. It thus forms an important link between the previous ‘quantitative’ approach to improving European defence capabilities and the new ‘qualitative’ emphasis of the Headline Goal 2010.

The Process

The idea of developing such a concept was floated at the Franco-British summit at Le Touquet (4 February 2003) and was made more explicit in the 24 November meeting, in London. At that meeting the two countries referred to the need for joint tactical groups – of about 1,500 soldiers each – to be created so as to strengthen the EU rapid reaction capability to support United Nations’ operations. The experience of Operation Artemis in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) – the first EU-led military operation launched in June 2003 at the request of the UN Security Council – is a typical scenario for which the battle groups may be deployed.

The Franco-British proposal - referred to as ‘Battle Groups’ by

the British or ‘Tactical Groups’ by the French - was endorsed by Germany in February 2004, and, on February 10, was submitted to the Political and Security Committee, which, in turn, asked for a Military Committee’s opinion on the technical aspects of the concept (February 18). It subsequently gained further support at the Brussels informal defence ministers and Chiefs of Defence Staff meeting, on 5/6 April. A target date of 2007 was set for achieving the first operational Battle Groups (expectations range from 6 to 10), although the EU could have two or three of them available much sooner based on existing capabilities and voluntary contributions under the Headline Goal Force Catalogue. It is expected that the formal endorsement of the Franco-British-German concept will occur at the 17-18 May Joint Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers’ Council and then form part of the new Headline Goal 2010, to be adopted at the June 2004 European Council.

In principle, the battle group proposal is open to all EU member states, although France and Britain stressed that a high degree of interoperability in terms of training, equipment, command and planning is required. It would therefore be one way in which the bar is set for the soon 25 member states to join in the newly emerging European defence club, by setting criteria for structured co-operation.

The Battle Group Concept

The trilateral proposal for EU battle groups consists of highly trained, battalion-size formations (1,500 soldiers each)¹ – including all combat and service support as well as deployability and sustainability assets. These should be available within 15 days notice and sustainable for at least 30 days (extendable to 120 days by rotation). They should be flexible enough to promptly undertake operations in distant crises areas (i.e. failing states), under, but not exclusively, a UN mandate, and to conduct combat missions in an extremely hostile environment (mountains, desert, jungle, etc). As such, they should prepare the ground for larger, more traditional peacekeeping forces, ideally provided by the UN or the Member States.

Not surprisingly, the development of the battle group concept implies the availability of strategic lift and combat support capabilities. In this respect, the concept is linked to the Helsinki Headline Goal process and its ambitions to make up key identified capability shortfalls.

Building on the original Helsinki Headline Goal (HHG)

The original Helsinki Headline Goal (1999) was a 'start up' process for ESDP capability development, setting out quantitative targets for military capability for 1999-2003. It aimed to develop an EU rapid reaction force consisting of 60,000 troops available at 60 days notice and sustainable for up to one year. The HHG process led to a review of the available capabilities (documented in three catalogues: the Headline Goal Catalogue, the Headline Force Catalogue and the Headline Progress Catalogue) which helped identify remaining shortfalls, particularly in the key areas of strategic lift and sustainability.

A key feature of the original HHG was the 'voluntary' nature of member states' commitments. This led to the cataloguing. This led to the cataloguing process, which helped identify the remaining shortfalls. But this process was limited in so far as the catalogues provide no guarantees regarding what assets, troops and resources are actually available or really operational. Furthermore, most analysts agree that the defence capability generation process (specifically under the European Capabilities Action Plan - ECAP) slowed down in late 2002/2003 and had not prevented the considerable waste of resources spent on inefficient generation of military capacity throughout Europe (amounting to 160 million Euro)².

Although the Helsinki Headline Goals were declared formally met in 2003, the Thessaloniki European Council, in June 2003, acknowledged that the EU operational capability across the full range of Petersberg tasks was still limited and constrained by recognised shortfalls. In December 2003, the EU Security Strategy prompted the institutions to revisit the original Headline Goal and capability generation process. The November 17 GAERC conclusions confirmed that the Petersberg Tasks would be revisited and 'defined' by the June 2004 European Council, under a new Headline Goal to be met by 2010. Beyond the continued efforts to make up key capability shortfalls, the new HG 2010 will focus on the need for qualitative improvements to put existing EU defence capabilities at the service of the whole range of crisis management operations, included in the revised Petersberg tasks³.

Implementing the defence aspects of the EU Security Strategy

If France, Britain and Germany manage to build consensus around their proposal, and if the Headline Goal 2010 is adopted by the end of the Irish Presidency, the battle group concept could be developed in the second half of this year. A commitments conference will be convened in order to make the concept real and fully operational by 2007, although a limited capability based on existing formations in the UK, Italy and France, for example, could be made available earlier.

Will it deliver new capabilities?

Crucially, the Battle Group concept is not just about re-arranging existing capabilities but is rather a tool to produce new ones. A key benchmark for measuring the value of the concept will be in seeing which countries offer to provide or create new Battle Groups at the commitments conference likely to be held this autumn. The EU Military Staff (EUMS) will also need to develop the concept through realistic scenario-based work to promote readiness, sustainability, concurrency and follow-on forces, as well as co-operation with and transition to civilian operations. It remains to be seen, however, if this work takes place within the EU Military Staff, in the new planning cell for civilian and military operations, or as part of the Armaments/Capabilities Agency's remit. The civil-military planning cell provides the obvious location for discussions relating to how Battle Groups might be deployed in complex conflicts and peacebuilding processes. There is little evidence, however, that the proposed cell will be robust enough to bridge the crucial 'security gap' known as the 'civil-military divide' and ensure an integrated and comprehensive approach to the planning of military and civilian EU interventions.

Gerrard Quille

1. *A battle group is the smallest self-sufficient military-operational formation that can be deployed and sustained in a theatre of operations. The concept draws upon standard NATO doctrine, for instance the NATO Response Force (NRF) 'land component' is a land brigade tactically configured with 5 Battle Groups.*
2. *See Jocelyn Mawdsley and Gerrard Quille, "The EU Security Strategy: a new framework for ESDP and equipping the EU Rapid Reaction Force", joint ISIS-BICC Report, December 2003. Available on <http://www.isiseurope.org/ftp/download/reportdefence.pdf>*
3. *The Petersberg tasks were also revised in the context of the Convention and the Intergovernmental Conference negotiations, yet to be concluded.*

Building a European intelligence community in response to terrorism

The European Union has not been passive in its fight against terrorism, but progress in implementing decisions taken by the Council of Ministers has been slow and piecemeal. At first glance, the terrorist bombings in Madrid on 11 March seem to have changed this. The declaration on combating terrorism from 25 March 2004 and the establishment of a counter-terrorism coordinator give the impression that the Union's work in the fight against terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and organised crime is entering a new era. Sharing intelligence and strengthening the cooperation between national intelligence agencies and European bodies plays an important part in this. The significance of intelligence has also been highlighted by the Austrian proposal to set up a 'European intelligence agency'. This article outlines the present state of intelligence collaboration within the EU as well as the most recent developments in the sector.

What is intelligence?

In the broadest sense, intelligence can be understood as processed information aimed at assisting decision-making. Since different types of decisions require different forms of support, member states have set up various types of organisations responsible for providing the necessary information. Those organisations involved in collecting information in secrecy or analysing secret information are normally labelled intelligence agencies. Most of them can be categorised according to their function, e.g. military, security, criminal or external intelligence agencies, or with reference to their method of collection, e.g. imagery or signal intelligence agencies.

European co-operation in criminal intelligence

In the third pillar, which deals with Justice and Home Affairs (JHA), the EU has sought to facilitate cross-border cooperation among national agencies in order to improve the support given to national decision-makers. With Europol, the Union created a clearing house for the exchange of criminal intelligence - this is its only body for sharing operational intelligence. The purpose of Europol and its approximately 65 criminal analysts is to support the criminal investigations conducted by national authorities and to establish links between serious crimes in different Member States. It does so by providing expertise, an analysis capacity and information from its databases. It also brings together around 70 seconded officers from national authorities. They co-operate in temporary task forces within Europol or on one of its 23 more permanent analytical work-files. The latter cover a range of areas from child pornography, vehicle theft and one work-file is

devoted to Islamic terrorism. In response to the Madrid bombings the Council decided to reactivate the closed counter-terrorist task force within Europol. The aim is to facilitate the direct exchange of information between national representatives in order to get a more complete picture of the criminal activities of terrorist groups. The task force will of course also be able to draw on findings from Europol's work-file on Islamic terrorism. To be of value for national investigations, the information exchanged is very detailed and can concern specific individuals, number plates of cars and phone numbers.

Co-operation in support of European external security policy

The EU has also established bodies within the Council Secretariat that are responsible for providing EU decision-makers working on Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in the second pillar with relevant information. Apart from open sources, these entities draw on information from the member states and the EU itself (most notably the Commission) or from commercial providers as in the case of the EU Satellite Centre (SATCEN).

SATCEN has taken over this function from the WEU and represents the first truly European intelligence capacity, in the sense that it provides the EU with a competency that does not exist in all member states. The importance of the centre and its 30 or so imagery analysts for the Union's policies should not, however, be exaggerated. SATCEN is neither the only provider of imagery intelligence from satellites nor does it own or operate any collection resources.

The intelligence division (INTDIV) of the European military staff consists of about 30 seconded officers from national intelligence agencies. They compile reports, based on national intelligence, to support the strategic planning that starts as soon as a crisis emerges and ends when the EU political authorities approve a military strategic option or a set of military strategic options. Consequently, the intelligence products of the INTDIV are of a strategic nature and less detailed than tactical military intelligence. The latter kind of support is provided from national agencies directly to the operational line of command and partly produced by the responsible force on the ground itself.

The expansion of the Joint Situation Centre's (SitCen) capacity, to include a counter-terrorism unit (CT Unit), is the only new development concerning intelligence cooperation in the second pillar since the Madrid bombings. The SitCen's current analysis capacity

consists of seven seconded national experts and this is likely to be doubled by the establishment of the CT Unit. The SitCen provides tailored situation and threat assessments, based on national intelligence, open sources, diplomatic reports from member states and the Commission's representations. The CT Unit will complement this by making threat assessments specifically relating to terrorism. The products from the SitCen primarily support the work of the Secretary General/High Representative of CFSP, Javier Solana, and the national Ambassadors that comprise the Political and Security Committee, the Union's principal decision-making body in the area of European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). These EU policies are essentially of diplomatic and preventive nature. They do not include strikes against identified terrorists, proliferators or criminals on territory that falls under the authority of third states, or assaults on vessels in international waters, nor do they comprise clandestine operations. Any such operations are executed by Member States independently. SitCen products are, therefore, of a strategic rather than operational nature. To what extent the Union's newly appointed counter-terrorism Coordinator Gijs de Vries (former member of the European Parliament, national representative in the European Convention and former secretary of state at the Dutch ministry of interior) will be involved in the CT Unit's work has not yet been clarified.

Is this enough?

Despite the political will to promote common action against terrorism, several difficulties remain concerning intelligence co-operation within the EU.

To begin with, there are a number of structural obstacles. The pillar division between work in the area of Justice and Home Affairs and in support of CFSP/ESDP effectively disconnects EU external and internal intelligence. A synthesis is not made at the EU level. Consequently, the structure of analysis is not adapted to the nature of the terrorist threat, which erases the border between internal and external threats.

A gap also exists concerning the inclusion of security intelligence into the EU system. This means that 'MI5-type' intelligence is not shared at the Union level. The Austrian proposal to set up such a 'European

intelligence agency' addressed this gap but was comprehensively rejected by the Council on 19 February 2004, mainly because member states considered it far too ambitious. Nevertheless, the creation of the CT Unit could be seen as a first step in this direction. Initially, however, it will focus on third countries and not the EU territory, since this falls within the national competencies. The exchange between security services will therefore continue outside of the Union through the so-called 'Club of Bern' in the foreseeable future, following the motto 'do not fix it unless it is broken'. This might satisfy the need of cross-border co-operation, but not the need of enhanced cross-agency co-operation between different branches.

A further obstacle to intelligence co-operation is that national intelligence communities are structured in different ways and agencies do not always have a counterpart in another state. It is therefore not always easy to determine what agencies should collaborate and what EU agency it should be linked to. Co-operation is made even more complicated by rivalries among some national agencies.

Arguably the most important brake on intelligence co-operation is the fact that this requires trust, built up over time. Just as the collection of intelligence in the field by agents and informers is based on building confidence with their sources (human intelligence), exchanging intelligence products between different European Agencies equally requires the gradual development of trusting relationships. One way to expedite this process would be to organise more collective education. Several practitioners regard this to be the best way of ensuring that staff from various agencies get to know and trust each other. This potential is far from being exhausted at the European level. A much more difficult, but equally important step forward would be a collective statement by all member states that they will refrain from spying on each other and braking laws in other member states to collect information on third parties. While member states preserve the right to spy on each other, it is difficult to envisage how they can also generate the requisite levels of trust for effective intelligence co-operation.

Björn Müller-Wille

The Dublin Conflict Prevention Action Agenda

Over 250 representatives from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) met in Dublin for a West European Regional Conference on conflict prevention from March 31 – April 2. This conference – one of fifteen to be held globally – was organised by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed

Conflict (GPPAC) and supported by the EU Irish Presidency. The conference successfully enabled the further development of the Dublin Action Agenda (see <http://www.xs4all.nl/~conflic1/Dublin/cover.htm>), with recommendations for how civil society organisations (CSOs) could better work together, with governments

and with the EU and UN in the pursuit of conflict prevention objectives. The Dublin Action agenda⁴ will also inform the broader International Action Agenda for civil society roles in conflict prevention, to be presented to the UN Secretary General in July 2005 in New York.

The UN High Level Panel on Global Security

The Dublin conference on the role of civil society and conflict prevention took place six months after UN Secretary General Kofi Annan announced, on 23 September 2003, the formation of a high level panel on global security threats and reform of the international system. One of the main purposes of the Dublin Action Agenda is to feed into the UN high-level panel recommendations.

Creating a stronger fusion between the UN and CSOs on conflict prevention related matters also readily fits with the findings of the UN Secretary General's Panel of Eminent Persons on Civil Society. These findings favour a new understanding of multilateralism within the UN system, which seeks to complement inter-state negotiations (yielding to lowest common denominator outcomes) with aspirational coalitions of the willing involving state and non-state actors, e.g. the coalition to ban landmines.

The Dublin Action Agenda – Ethos and Principles

The provisional Dublin Action Agenda was codified and handed over to the Irish Presidency of the EU on 2 April. The Agenda not only forwards practical recommendations for the CSOs, the EU, the UN and individual governments, but also outlines guiding principles in order to effectively pursue conflict prevention.⁵ For example, the theme of human security is prevalent. It is argued that broader definitions of security are required, while national and international actors require a more fluid early response capability in order to react to conflict as soon as conflict indicators register on the radar screen. In pursuing a stronger conflict prevention focus, the Agenda points to the responsibility to prevent and protect in line with the conclusions of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, which supports intervention in the interest of human security.⁶ Additionally, the role of education and the promotion of a Culture of Peace are highlighted in the Agenda. The promotion of local ownership and a new strategic partnership between civil society, government and IGOs⁷ is advocated as necessary in the pursuit of a conflict prevention approach. The Agenda also notes the campaign on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

Recommendations for CSOs, EU, UN and governments

In accordance with these principles, the Dublin Action Agenda puts forward practical recommendations, which apply to CSOs, the EU, UN and governments respectively.

Civil Society Organisations

Specifically the need for CSO networking and coalition building in order to facilitate inter-agency co-ordination, joint initiatives and the exchange of experiences is advocated in the Agenda. It is recommended that Civil Peace Services be developed in member states with responsibilities for the recruitment, training and deployment of expert civilians for conflict prevention operations. It is also recommended that a public awareness campaign should be orchestrated to focus on the July 2005 UN conference.

The EU

The Dublin Action Agenda also forwards recommendations to the EU on how to mainstream CSO participation in EU activities, so as to engender a conflict prevention focus. In doing so, the appointment of CSO co-ordinators in EC delegations is recommended. In addition to the need to focus on early warning and early action mechanisms – through the development of civilian capabilities with CSO support – the EU should ensure local CSO partnership in assessing the impact or potential impact of EU interventions on the ground. The Agenda also recommends the need for EU consultation and programmes with CSOs in tackling weapons proliferation and the benefit of utilising civil society as an alternative entry point in states and regions in crisis. At the EU institutional level, the *Agenda* calls for promotion of formal civil society engagement in political and civilian crisis management dialogue – notable in the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and CIVCOM.

The UN

The Agenda also sets out recommendations on how CSOs could better interact with the UN, with the aim of furthering the conflict prevention agenda. These recommendations equally range from early warning and early response mechanisms to the need for an interface between the UN and CSOs. On a practical level, the Agenda calls for UN staff training on early warning indicators to be made more available to CSOs. Also on the operational side, the Agenda notes the benefit of creating and training specialist teams for rapid conflict response, which should include CSO and academic experts. At an institutional level, greater CSO and UNDP consultation regarding post-conflict needs assessments is called for.

Governments

The recommendations to governments are based largely upon the need to prioritise the conflict prevention agenda. The recommendations include the development of national conflict prevention mechanisms (with CSO influence), strategic CSO interaction with donor governments and greater resource mobilisation for conflict prevention activities at national level.

Engaging political support

The Dublin conference demonstrated the EU Irish Presidency's focus on conflict prevention and symbolically took place at the same time as a meeting in Dublin between the EU and the African Union on the theme of conflict resolution and prevention. However, the lack of formal communication between conference participants and the EU's committee on crisis management - CIVCOM – (which held a parallel meeting in Dublin *also* on the theme of conflict prevention at the same time as the conference) can be considered a missed opportunity for both CSOs and CIVCOM. Also, apart from the European Commission, there was a marked absence of other donors and conflict prevention actors, including governmental donor agencies - who in effect often set the conflict prevention agenda - and other inter-governmental and regional actors, most notably the Council of Europe and OSCE.

What remains now to be seen is whether governments, the EU and the UN buy-in to the Dublin Action Agenda, as part of a broader commitment to promoting human security. The reality is that long-term approaches to conflict prevention are still relatively sidelined in the EU and elsewhere, in comparison with the priority given to short-term (often military) crisis management responses. As one speaker suggested at

the conference, 'talking to politicians about conflict prevention is like talking to teenagers about pensions.' Thus, the greatest challenge identified for CSOs is to effectively engage with governments to adopt longer-term horizons in line with the principles of conflict prevention clearly stated in the Dublin Action Agenda. In order to advocate this approach successfully, CSOs must show governments, regional and international organisation the benefits of preventive measures, rather than always resorting to crisis measures after the outbreak of conflict. Implementation of the Dublin Action Agenda would certainly be a good first step in making this happen, but ultimately a cognitive change of the political agenda is required. The dawning of such a new agenda, however, requires political will in support of long-term human security approaches rather than short-term responses to perceived threats.

Rory Keane

1. *The Dublin Action Agenda is being coordinated by the European Centre for Conflict Prevention, in its chairmanship role of the GPPAC. See www.conflict-prevention.org (ECCP).*
2. *The provisional Dublin Action Agenda decouples any notion of linkage between the war on terror and conflict prevention by making the point that strategies deployed in the 'War Against Terror' are likely to prove counter-productive and, therefore, ultimately risk being self-defeating.*
3. *'Responsibility to Protect', International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canadian Government, para 8.33. Found at: <http://www.dfa-it-maeci.gc.ca/iciss-ciise/report2-en.asp#foreword>*
4. *This new partnership will serve to affirm and build on the principle identified in UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Report on 'The Prevention of Armed Conflict', where he recognised that conflict prevention cannot happen without civil society involvement*

The Commission moves into defence research

After many years of bitter complaint from defence industry about a lack of progress at the EU level on the funding of defence and security research, inaction has recently turned to purposeful activity. While the Agency in the field of Armaments, Research and Military Capabilities was meant to cover activity in defence related research, it seems that in a major departure from established practice the Commission intends to snatch this responsibility for itself thus bringing defence into the first pillar. Recent communiqués, a Group of Personalities Report commissioned by the Commission, a pilot funding action and budgetary planning document, all indicate that the Commission is breaking new ground and moving into the business of funding defence research. This article documents this trend and questions the

legal grounds, procedural legitimacy and effectiveness of these actions.

The Trend

The Commission's efforts to take over defence-related research have a long history. While the Framework Programmes for research have never been allowed to fund defence-related research, increasingly over the years, dual use research has been funded. Of late however the pace has quickened, especially following the Council decision to set up the Agency. Following a number of communiqués in cognate areas such as defence equipment¹ and aerospace industry² which claimed that the Commission should play a role in defence research, the Commission issued a communiqué in March on security research³ and a

decision on implementing a preparatory action⁴ and on 15 March the Group of Personalities for Security Research (GoP), set up by the Commission, presented its report to Romano Prodi⁵. These actions have involved the use of much ambiguous language to disguise the defence-related nature of their contents such as the use of the new term security research. Subsequently, the Commission published the first call for proposals for projects and supporting activities under the new 'Preparatory Action on the enhancement of the European industrial potential in the field of Security Research' (PASR 2004) on 31 March. This action expects to spend 65 million euros over three years and would serve as a pilot phase for the Commission's broader agenda of establishing a separate security research programme to facilitate a EU security culture. This would be in addition to the dual-use research already funded under the existing Framework Programmes for research and to any research activity carried out by the new Agency in the field of Armaments, Research and Military Capabilities. However, it appears to duplicate parts of both mandates. The Preparatory Action will fund projects in the following priority mission areas:

- Improving situation awareness
- Optimising security and protection of networked systems
- Protecting against terrorism
- Enhancing crisis management
- Achieving interoperability and integrated systems for information and communication.

There was some surprise that these priorities do not map the agreed priorities on anti-terrorist activity given that this was meant to be the Commission's key role but instead seemed more linked to security policy.

In the communiqué on security research the Commission also draws heavily on the EU Security Strategy for its inspiration rather than its Justice and Home Affairs portfolio (by which it might more reasonably have been expected to be guided given its importance for its supposed role in security) but otherwise it merely further elaborates on the plans for the preparatory action. As in the preparatory action documentation, there is a failure to define what exactly the Commission thinks security research is. The Commission's uses a somewhat unusual definition of security culture in its communiqué - "Europe needs to invest in a 'security culture' that harnesses the combined and relatively untapped strengths of the 'security' industry and the research community in order to effectively and innovatively address existing and future security challenges." Finally in the Group of Personalities Report on Security Research, established by the Commission to advise it, there are clear signs that the Commission is planning to expand its

activities into defence research. It contends that there should be no division between civilian and military security research but suggests that 1 billion euro per year should be spent on security research in addition to any activity carried out by the Agency and existing dual-use research programmes.

Legal Grounds

The Commission has a legitimate role in promoting *civilian* security research, but its mandate for involvement in defence research is extremely controversial and has frequently been opposed in the past by some member states and groups in the European Parliament. There are therefore some questions about the constitutionality of the Commission's actions regarding both their mandate and source of funding. Firstly, although the Commission's website suggests that the Thessaloniki presidency conclusions asked them to embark on a security research programme, in fact these conclusions asked the Agency to promote 'in liaison with the Community's research activities where appropriate, research aimed at leadership in strategic technologies for future defense and security capabilities'. This would continue the current division of responsibilities with the Member States retaining power over defence-related matters. The Commission also claims legitimacy from the results of opinion polls that show the European citizens support ESDP. But the question of Commission funding for defence research has never been put to the public. Secondly, it appears that the funding approved for the Preparatory Action in 2004 has been provided under Article 157 of the EC Treaty (Title XVI -Industry) rather than under Title XVIII (Research) as ordered in Article 163(3) of the Treaty⁶. The British House of Commons European Scrutiny Committee has already raised these questions, asking British ministers to clarify matters with the Commission⁷.

Procedural Concerns

Regardless of the legality of their actions, the Commission does not appear to be approaching this new field in an open and transparent manner. The Group of Personalities it asked to produce a report on security research, for example, would hardly measure well against the Commission's own good governance yardstick. Firstly, the Group's composition is strange. There are notable absentees; the Justice and Home Affairs Commissioner Vitorino was not included (strange given his responsibility on anti-terrorism and border control); no member from the European Group on Ethics (odd given the major civil liberties implications of the research proposed); no co-option of a member of the Agency Establishment Team; and poor representation (only Eurocontrol) of users of

civilian security research like Europol or national security agencies. Instead representatives from NATO, the WEAO, OCCAR, Belgian and Greek defence ministry officials, defence research institutes and a large defence industry contingent were chosen reflecting a strong bias towards military rather than civilian research. Secondly, the Report is strange in that it appears to be presenting an industry wish list rather than impartial expert advice. Unsurprisingly, it contends that there should be no division between military and civilian research and argues for a huge 1 billion euros per year (minimum) to be spent on security research thus helping to meet the Lisbon target of 3% of GDP spent on research. Its primary claim for doing this appears to be that as the US has chosen to invest this much in Homeland Security so must the EU, to ensure that US industry does not have a competitive advantage.

The European Commission appears to be relying heavily in its efforts to acquire a role in defence policy for advice and to legitimise its actions on groups of experts, whose balance is not always evident. The NGO Statewatch has heavily criticised the Commission for the lack of accountability in this procedure⁸ and underlined the necessity for the Commission not to merely reproduce the recommendations of such groups in its communiqués. Indeed of late, it is becoming increasingly difficult to see a clear division between these types of documents. The Star 21 Report on aerospace industry⁹ and the communiqué responding to it provide a perfect example of the problem and this practice is worrying from a good governance perspective. It is to be hoped that the European Parliament will be scrutinising such developments fully in its annual report on arms exports and the defence industry.

Is this likely to produce effective action?

The Commission appears throughout the documentation to be extremely keen to justify its actions, but this is leading it to make a problematic conflation of issues. If the security threat is so great that a huge extra Homeland Security research programme is needed as in America (although many European commentators have been arguing that the American reaction is excessive), then surely this

should be an applied research programme and therefore the (predominantly civilian) users rather than the producers of such research should be advising on this. Equally, technology cannot solve all security problems and its use must be balanced by respect for civil liberties. The ELISE research network is correct to call for the Commission to take a more balanced approach¹⁰. If on the other hand, as the recent communiqués and reports seem to suggest, the Commission's primary aim is to ensure technological and industrial competitiveness for defence industry in the global market, then they should be openly making a cogently argued economic and scientific case for special subsidy of this specific sector, which engages with the considerable economic arguments against such a move. The issue of EU commitments in the fields of arms control and non-proliferation needs to be considered as well. The need to deal with new security challenges and the economic competitiveness of defence industry are not the same and it is misleading to conflate them as the Commission is currently doing. Furthermore, the constitutional significance of a Commission move into defence activity should not be under-estimated, and as such should not happen by the backdoor without debate.

Jocelyn Mawdsley

1. *COM 2003 113 final*
2. *COM 2003 600 final*
3. *COM (2004) 72 final*
4. *Decision 2004/213/EC*
5. http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/security/pdf/gop_en.pdf
6. *The proposed financial framework for 2007-2013 (COM 2004 (101) final) seems to suggest that it places a proposed 3 billion euros to be spent on security research in the research budget but this is not clear. It is also not clear whether this figure will be revised following the GoP report.*
7. *House of Commons European Scrutiny Committee 12th Report of the 2003-4 Parliamentary Session.*
8. <http://www.statewatch.org/news/2004/feb/23Aeu-plan-security.htm>
9. http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/aerospace/report_star21_screen.pdf
10. http://www.ceps.be/Article.php?article_id=319&

ESR News In Brief

Interim Report on EU Strategic Partnership with Mediterranean and the Middle East

At the 26 March European Council, the Irish Presidency delivered an Interim Report on the EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East countries. This followed the request made

by the December 2003 European Council to the Presidency and the SG/HR to elaborate, in co-ordination with the Commission, concrete proposals on a strategy towards this region. The Strategic Partnership should be finalised by the June 2004 European Council.

The report stresses the need for the EU to raise its engagement in the region, by working in partnership with the states concerned to support internally driven economic, political and social reforms. The aim of the strategy is to develop a set of guiding principle and objectives for its engagement, to be implemented through existing instruments and, where appropriate, by developing new ones.

In particular, the paper sets eleven overarching objectives for the EU: 1) creating a common zone of peace, prosperity and progress; 2) focussing on relations with North Africa and the Middle East; 3) resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a strategic priority; 4) a long-term and sustained engagement; 5) a strengthening of the EU's political dialogue with the region; 6) striving for respect for human rights and the rule of law; 7) promote action and co-operation on terrorism, WMD and non-proliferation; 8) support state's and civil society efforts to pursue economic, political and social reforms; 9) promote enhanced security dialogue with the Mediterranean partners in the framework of ESDP and in co-operation with NATO; 10) modernisation of the regulatory environment and liberalisation of trade; 11) co-operation with the US, UN and other international actors in the pursuit of these goals.

The first phase in developing the strategy (January-March 2004) has seen discussions being pursued in Council Working Groups (COMAG/COMEM), by Political Directors, at the PSC, COREPER and GAERC (23 February). The next phase will be mainly characterized by active consultation with partners in the region to identify common objectives.

Italian Gen. Mosca Moschini appointed as second Chief of the EU Military Committee

The informal Defence Ministers' meeting, in Brussels, on April 7, ended with a short ceremony in the presence of the EU High Representative, Javier Solana, to witness the hand over of the chairmanship of the EU Military Committee (EUMC) from the Finnish General Gustav Häggglund to the Italian General Rolando Mosca Moschini. Since 2001, he had been serving as Italian Armed Forces Chief of Defence. Throughout his career, he had also served as Military Attaché to the Italian Embassy in London and, as Military Advisor to the Italian Permanent Mission to the United Nations, he was member of the Italian Delegation to the Security Council.

Gen. Mosca Moschini was elected to the highest EU military function on 7 may 2003, by the 15 members of the EUMC. Aware of taking over a busy and ambitious agenda, which includes, just for this year, the creation of a EU planning cell, the decision over

the battle groups concept and the take-over of the Bosnia mission from NATO, the new EUMC Chief pointed that his focus will be on concrete steps to take such projects forward. In this context, he considers Bosnia as an important test. Another major challenge will be, for the Italian General, to harmonize the positions of the soon-to-be 25 members of the EUMC. With regard to relations with NATO, he affirmed that the guiding principles will continue to be a tight co-operation and the non duplication of structures.

Possible EU's peacekeeping mission to Sudan

In an interview with the *Financial Times* (April 13), the outgoing chairman of the EU's Military Committee, Gen. Häggglund, raised the prospect of the EU undertaking a peacekeeping mission in Sudan. In 2004, tensions in the western region of Darfur between the army and two rebel groups – the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) – as well as between the rebel groups and the government-backed Arab militia, - the Janjaweed – have been escalating, forcing some 800,000 people to internally displace or to flee to neighbouring Chad. For its spill-over effects, the conflict is now raising major concerns throughout the African continent and the international community as a whole.

According to Gen. Häggglund, the possibility of the EU sending peacekeeping troops to Sudan had been raised by Louise Fréchette, the UN's deputy secretary-general. Such a mission would be mandated by the UN and would be part of the battle group concept developed by France and the UK