

Looking from the Netherlands it seems that we could draw some lessons from the experience of Irak, Afghanistan and earlier operations:

1. There is a clear link between security and development. Without a basic level of security development money is wasted.
2. No crisis can be solved by military means only, and a comprehensive approach is needed before an operation is started. In such an approach the EU has obvious advantages, because it possesses a wider spectrum of instruments than NATO. But so far the EU has been lacking in being sufficiently comprehensive in practice and its military capabilities are insufficient.
3. EU -NATO cooperation is essential, which requires a more determined effort to resolve the Cyprus problem.
4. As NATO is about to adopt a new Strategic Concept, the EU should start adapting its own strategic approach. The Solana Strategy of 2003 and the implementation report of December 2008 are fine as far as they went, but provide insufficient basis for force planning. The updating of the Headline Goals is a useful step, but still does not provide guidance for individual member countries.
5. The EU has made progress in combining military and civilian planning. This could lead to a military-civilian headquarter in Brussels integrating the two fields of action. In this way the EU also would avoid mirroring NATO and the ensuing competition between the two organisations. The Netherlands Clingendael Institute has published an important study in January "Breaking Pillars".
6. Among the autonomous EU operations the one in Aceh has been the most succesful by using a window of opportunity and adroit diplomatic moves, including ASEAN.
7. The experience of all other operations shows that they last much longer than originally anticipated. Murphy's laws apply. This means that longer term planning is necessary and probably a system of rotation of forces.
8. Most of our countries are changing the composition and equipment of their forces. Tanks are out and helicopters, drones and ground surveillance are in. Nevertheless, ultimately we need boots on the ground. The revolution of military affairs has not yet been as radical as anticipated. Moreover, new threats have appeared: piracy (where the EU is doing more than NATO), cyber war appears on the horizon, in addition to mainly non-military threats like organised crime, drugs smuggling, and illegal immigration which require closer cooperation at the level of police and justice.
9. Fighting terrorism is too general a concept. Terrorism is a method and in Afghanistan has become asymmetric warfare. In general the motives of terrorists differ considerably and should be analysed in each particular case.
10. The European Defence Agency has succeeded in making the defence equipment market more transparent, but fell short in mounting cooperative projects. Hopefully, the current pressure on defence budgets wil provide a new stimulus, although coperative projects not always turn out cheaper. Tight management is needed.