

What to expect from the European Council on Defense in the framework of the Common European Security and Defense framework ?

16 November 2013, by Admiral (Retd) Willy Herteleer

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Looking at the way European Nations got involved in the Libya crises in 2011, how some nations took the lead without much consultation of the others, how the involvement of all the EU nations was different with some not being involved at all; looking at the way NATO got involved, but above all at how the European Union was absent in this period of decision making we would expect to see some **guidance** coming from the European Council on the importance of **early consultation** and on the necessity of **common decision** making supported by genuine **information sharing**.

The European approach to the Syria crises in 2013 was not better than two years before. But then, also NATO struggled to define a common position. The difference is that in NATO one Nation, the USA, can, all alone, plan and eventually execute military actions that would make a difference. The Nations of the European Union should realize that **individually they cannot make a difference** and that they only will affect events if they act in unity.

It is normal that, with an upcoming crises in the Southern or Eastern Broader Neighborhood of Europe, one or two Nations of the Union will, for historic reasons, be better informed than all the others. That or those Nations will be more motivated to act and should take the lead. But their first action should be to inform and to consult the Union in order to come to that common position and that common communication to the rest of the world. For the crises in Mali this year, a challenge for the EU, it is normal that France took the lead. But before acting, a better consultation in and with the Union, sharing information, explaining what the mission was going to be, giving an indication on the rules of engagement, would have been a better approach.

This early and better involvement of the Union might, on the one hand, have avoided problems with the sustainment of the action and with the follow-up after the initial operations, but on the other hand might have complicated an early timely decision making.

All important International Organizations struggle with this problem of timely decision making. Before 1990, the East-West confrontation and the resulting Cold War partly explains this stalemate in the United Nations but the European Union with a common market, easing even economic antagonisms, does have no excuse for not performing better in this field.

The fact that in some Nations of the Union the Government has to seek approval by the Parliament before involvement of the Armed Forces while in others the parliamentary control is a *à posteriori* process poses a difficulty that needs to be looked into.

Conclusion in the domain of the Foreign Affairs: Again and again it is underlined how all the Nations of the EU share the same values, how they all face the same challenges and how they have to confront the same dangers; this should result in a **guidance** from the summit, to the Capitals and to the European Institutions, aiming at a better **early communication**, with **sharing of information**, in order to come to a **common position** announcing the possibility of a **common action** also using military assets.

That sharing of information could be done in a European Intelligence Fusion Centre drawing on all the relevant intelligence and information available in the Union and producing some kind of Comprehensive Strategic Overview.

There is also a need for a charismatic spoke person explaining and selling to the public and the world the ongoing and planned EU operations.

INFORMATION SHARING – COMMON DECISION MAKING –COMMUNICATION

Ministry of Defense

Based on the same recent experience in relation to Libya, to Mali and to a lesser extend to Syria, capability shortfalls are being detected and formulated as needed to be addressed. Never since the end of the cold war were the military capabilities of the Nations of the European Union deployed and employed to their fullest extent. Therefore **caution** is to be taken when

formulating shortfalls. This shortfalls can be the result of a **political unwillingness to participate fully** rather than by not being available in the overall European military inventory.

A number of newly identified needed capabilities cannot be acquired in sufficient quality and quantity by a single European Nation. A common acquisition is to be considered. In particular we are thinking about air ground surveillance and UAVs for intelligence collection; observation, communications and navigation from space; ballistic missile defense; air refueling and the projection of military power from the sea. The NATO AWACS program is an example of how **internationally** can be **acquired** what is nationally impossible.

The European Defense Agency (EDA) and its defense planning processes are mainly dealing with these issues.

Defense planning is the process that deals with the creation of the military instrument, **operational planning** deals with the use of that military instrument. And while defense planning is certainly very important, operational planning is much more exciting. The public opinion is always going to be more interested in operational planning than in defense planning. What operational planning is now going on in the Union in relation to the crises in Syria, ... wouldn't we like to know? Contingency operational planning does not mean automatic involvement, it merely assist in the decision to get involved or not. But for operational planning to be done correctly and to be seen as truly European a European **Operational Headquarter** is required.

Also for the quality "Command and Control" of operations, where the European Union is involved, that Operational Headquarter is a must. Today this authority is exercised either through the NATO Command structure or using National Operational Headquarters. Using the NATO structure can be problematic in some scenarios where, on their request, NATO and/or the US involvement is not indicated or when a non-EU nation, member of NATO, opposes this cooperation. A National Headquarter each time has to be augmented for the task at hand and to allow for a correct representation of the Nations providing the forces. These ad-hoc solutions do not guarantee optimal staff procedures and do not allow for training sufficiently in advance of deployment.

And finally, correct defence planning (creation of the tool) is to be based on some kind of operational concept of purpose, a general defence/intervention plan, such a concept and plan is the result of operational strategic planning to be done by an operational headquarter.

It is in training, in French “**la mise en condition**”, that most progress can and should be made. How many military **pilot** schools are needed in Europe? How many can Europe afford? Where are average weather conditions most suitable? Where is airspace available? The French and the Belgian Air Force now share one military pilot school, in France (weather and space) using French built Alpha Jets many acquired and modernized by Belgium.

How many field **artillery** schools are needed in Europe? Where is space available? Where in Europe can a **brigade** size force with all its components realistically train? Where is a realistic opposing force available? Where, for a tactical evaluation, are sufficient umpires? Where are sufficient **naval** assets being brought together for a realistic multi threat training?

The answer to all these questions is: nowhere in a single European Nation, but maybe achievable **internationally**.

Unless the Nations of Europe work together in preparing their military forces, from instruction to realistic training, there is a fear that they will not be correctly ready for high intensity violence operations. The decades of **NATO experience**, its standardization agreements and its many tactical and other publications, also available for the PfP Nations, will help this cooperation in “preparation” enormously.

Today there are many examples of this common “Mise en Condition” many of them came into being by a **bottom up** approach not because a political authority advised them. The decision of training together, of merging peacetime structures, is politically **easier** than the decision to employ the Forces in a particular crises.

While niche specialization is happening already, fusion of capabilities and structures will have to be the driving force of this European Capability development. Fusion leads to a greater interdependency rather than a perceived loss of sovereignty.

Conclusion in the domain of Defence: The reduced necessity to invest in military capabilities because of the **reduced threat** on the national territories, the **increased cost** of military capabilities because of the obligation to have them **deployable and sustainable** in peace time, the obligation to invest in **new expensive capabilities** from intelligence collection and the use of space over air-refueling to power projection, make it for the single European Nation **impossible** to acquire and maintain a meaningful set of military forces.

We expect from the Summit on defense some guidance promoting cooperation in a European framework addressing the **acquisition as well as the preparation as the employment** of Military Forces.

As far as equipment is concerned one can think, in intelligence collection, about: acquiring, using EU multinational funding, a Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) system to complement the high altitude air ground surveillance that is now being introduced in NATO around Global Hawks also funded by European Nations; about EU internationalizing, even more than is now the case, the Helios 2 observation system from space; about space programs for radio communications. Also the air refueling capacity is to be brought up to a size so that the European Union can execute a “Libyan air campaign” type operation without American aid, for this also precision ammunitions will have to be available in sufficient quantity.

In training (preparation – mise en condition) the creation of one EU permanent helicopter training command, the creation of three or four EU permanent training commands for Rapid Reaction Forces, (clustering the national RRFs regionally in Europe), the creation of one or two (Atlantic and Mediterranean) EU permanent training commands for Naval Forces. These training commands can become the parent institutions to generate deployable Force Commands in case of operations.

In employment the creation in Brussels of an Operational Headquarter for the operational planning in support of the defense planning and of the employment of EU military assets and for the conduct, at operational command level, of ongoing operations is a necessity. Identifying and certifying three or four EU international deployable Army Corps Command structures. The creation of a single EU airspace command for policing and eventual intervention.

Ministry of Economics

Cooperation in acquisition is first and foremost an economic issue. Apart from difficulties in “operational specifications” and “alignment in timing” national “**economic**” and “**employment**” considerations will complicate the decision making.

But the financial situation in all European Nations will make the **development** of three different types of European Fighter Aircraft for more or less the same mission, of three different types of European Main Battle Tanks, of up to twenty different Armored Personnel Carriers or Infantry Fighting Vehicles and up to six different European Aegis Class Warship, just affordable in the recent past, **impossible**.

Because of **Article TFEU 346** the European market in defense matters is fragmented. Indeed, in order to protect so called essential national security interests, the article provides for a derogation from the European procurement laws, voted for the creation of a performing European Common Market. In reality the article is used to protect the national market from normal competition from other European firms thus preventing the benefits for all from that greater market. Not national security but the national firms, some partly state owned, and national employment are the object of protection and this is against the spirit of the creation of the European Union and its common market.

Article TFEU 346 is to be turned around in order to create a real common market also in defense and security equipment. At the same time the article should provide a protection of that market like the US market is protected by its laws and rules. It is only at the European level that **protecting essential security interests** makes sense. It also would be wise and smart for that common EU market to negotiate with the US market in order to break down barriers thus helping to build the transatlantic link in security and defense.

At the same time “**export licenses**” should become a European responsibility thus leveling the competition playing field for all and “**offset ruling**” should make the difference between the internal European Market, where it is restricted, and the external international market where it has to be allowed.

Conclusion in the domain of the Economy: We expect from the Summit on Defense some guidance on the application of “Article 346”, limiting it excessive use, on the desired uniformity of the “Export Licenses” and on the rationalization of the “Offset ruling”.

ARTICLE 346 – EXPORT LICENCES – OFFSET RULING

16 November 2013

Willy Herteleer
Admiral (Retd)
Honorary aid to the King
President EURODEFENSE- Belgium
<http://eurodefense-belgium.eu/>