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KEYNOTE SPEECH

German MEP calls for EU white paper on security policy

By Julian Hale

In an opening keynote speech to the European Security Conference on 20 November, German MEP Karl von Wogau (EPP-ED) called for a European White Paper on security policy focussing on key capabilities, common equipment and better spending. He said that proposals announced by France's President Nicolas Sarkozy and the Spanish government should be taken up in a white paper containing practical measures for the implementation and the further development of the European Security Strategy, agreed by EU governments in 2003. Better spending and better decision-making were constant refrains during his speech.

HARMONISATION AND TRAINING

"It would be a big step forward to harmonise the equipment and the training of troops which are available for common operations under the command of the European Union, first of all the battlegroups," said Von Wogau.

Von Wogau described the situation with regard to defence spending in the EU as "European inefficiency" and said that it "is partly due to the fact that we do not have a common European defence equipment market. This leads to much unnecessary duplication of procurement programmes". He referred to 23 parallel programmes for armoured vehicles, three parallel programmes for combat aircraft and 89 major European weapons programmes in comparison to only 27 in the United States. In short, he wants to ensure that soldiers who are sent on European missions have the right equipment, that duplication between member states is avoided and that equipment is harmonised. "The use of different and often incompatible equipment in multinational operations lowers efficiency and raises costs," he added.

In this connection, he said that there is therefore a need for more efficiency in defence procurement and intra-Community transfers (current yearly cost estimated at €3.16 billion for 2003) and binding common rules for arms exports. He was therefore looking forward to

seeing the corresponding European Commission proposals, "hopefully by the end of the year".

Another of his main ideas is to have a common European headquarters for European Security and Defence Policy missions. He described the current

"It would be a big step forward to harmonise the equipment and the training of troops which are available for common operations under the command of the European Union, first of all the battlegroups," said Von Wogau

[NATO] Berlin Plus and five national headquarters for multilateral operations as being "more than duplication".

SPACE AND TELECOMS

The German MEP was also critical of the fact that there are currently three parallel national systems of satellite-based intelligence (Helios, SAR-Lupe and Cosmo Skymed) but that "the images from these systems have not been available to our common satellite centre in Torrejón". In his view, real-time pictures, independent from weather and day time, are needed for military missions under European command as well as for humanitarian missions, natural disasters, the surveillance of the EU's outside borders and for the observation of the EU's critical infrastructures. "It is imperative that the next generation of these systems is a common European one," said Von Wogau.

The chairman of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defence has started work on a report on the significance of space for EU security. He said that "Galileo and GMES have very important security roles" and that "they are of the highest importance for our future security".

"Autonomous access to space has become an indispensable element of sovereignty – and it can only be ensured by close European cooperation," he added.

Von Wogau also said that there are currently five national telecommunications systems used to run multinational operations. He called for "a common basic standard for the communications systems of military, police and disaster relief services," because a common system "would be less costly, more efficient and less risky for the personnel running these operations".

EU-NATO RELATIONS

Von Wogau also said that close cooperation between NATO and the European Union is "of the utmost importance" and that the EU's aim is "an effective and balanced partnership with the US". However, he said he was concerned about EU-NATO relations.

"The political high-level contacts at the top are good, but I have the impression that the relationship and the cooperation at the practical level are constantly torpedoed by one single NATO member state, Turkey. We have to find a solution which ensures that political decisions can be jointly implemented," he said. ■

The main threats to security

For Von Wogau, the main threats to security are the same as they were in 2003 – terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and regional conflicts:

Terrorism. The events in London and Madrid and several foiled attempts show that the danger is still there

Weapons of mass destruction. The proliferation of WMDs remains a pressing concern

Regional conflicts. The conflicts in Africa, the tensions in the Balkans and the protracted conflicts in the Middle East all remain to be solved

Furthermore, problems of the supply of energy and water remain on the agenda and are even more urgent than four years ago.

OPENING DEBATE

Security and defence policy is a new concept

By Teresa Küchler

The future success of European security and defence doctrine depends on a whole range of precautionary measures, such as effective intelligence information sharing, advanced technology solutions to trace terrorism and organised crime and even language training, on top of traditional military means, a round table of experts on European defence and security has stated.

At the first European Security Conference, held in Brussels on 19 November, debaters presented a security notion beyond scrambling for soldiers and tanks among member states.

Speaking via a video link from Paris, French Interior Minister and former Defence Minister Michelle Alliot-Marie said a "Europe of defence" already exists.

"We have the necessary structures, and this is shown in a number of operations," she said, mentioning the past and ongoing Congo missions, Bosnia and Afghanistan. Alliot-Marie said the means, the material and the proper institutions were already at place, although the European response to calls for intervention did not always live up to expectations.

Furthermore, Alliot-Marie listed established structures within both the defence and justice and home affairs area, such as the European Arrest Warrant or existing common databases of criminals and terrorist suspects, for instance, that together contribute to protecting EU citizens from threats in and outside the Union's borders.

The minister, however, called for a broader "Europe of security". She said the exterior problems that the EU is currently dealing with, such as conflicts in Africa and the Middle East, are closely linked to the EU's interior problems such as terrorism, which although it has its origins outside the EU's borders, has already manifested itself in the very heart of the Union. International rings of paedophiles, traffickers of humans or drugs, cross-border crime were other problems the minister said required further pooling of efforts within the EU and, above all, sharing of information and police

means. This is essential in order to create a secure Europe, she said.

"We have to make our borders impenetrable," the minister said. She underlined that the development of advanced technologies for information-sharing, as well as language training for the staff involved

"If we want to have any impact, influence over NATO or over the US in terms of foreign policy, then we must bring something into the family of the alliance," said Elmar Brok

was necessary in order to create effective European intelligence and police cooperation.

EUROPE MUST STICK TO ITS PROMISES

German Conservative MEP and Chairman of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defence, Karl von Wogau, agreed with the French minister on the scope of EU security policy. He said that Europe had developed a rather "large notion" of security, including classic justice and home affairs areas, such as intelligence-sharing and police measures, rather than only civilian or military risk and conflict intervention.

His fellow German Conservative MEP, Elmar Brok, said that there was a tight link between security and defence, and that the Lisbon Treaty would provide proper tools needed to conduct efficient foreign policy and to get rid of administrative problems, such as having three different persons speaking on behalf of the EU in foreign affairs: the acting Presidency, the European Commission and the Council (the member states' governments).

"With all these three persons becoming one and the same under the reform treaty, Henry Kissinger's wish from the 1970s to be able to pick up a phone and dial one number to Europe can come true," Brok said.

Brok also said the EU must step up from being one of the world's biggest payers for crisis management in the world to becoming one of its biggest players.

"Kosovo will be a test to see if the EU can have **one** opinion, and prepare itself to intervene in a preventive way," Brok said. He underlined the need to pool and develop European military capabilities in order to carry out the EU's security visions. According to the MEP, the EU spends roughly half as much money on military capabilities as the US, but can only come up with some 10% of the capabilities, due to unnecessary duplication between member states' work.

"Only if we have military capabilities can we conduct foreign policy," Brok said.

"If we want to have any impact, influence over NATO or over the US in terms of foreign policy, then we must bring something into the family of the alliance," he continued.

As an example of the EU's shortcomings, Brok mentioned that EU member states had promised to contribute up to 200 helicopters to the troops in Afghanistan, but so far had only sent some 35 to the troubled area.

Brok also said he was confident the EU would have its own army in the future.

German Secretary of State Peter Altmaier said the EU must live up to the promises made.

"In theory, we are brilliant, but in practice we are much more relaxed," the minister said. Altmaier mentioned the European Gendarmerie Force (EGF), a police force with some mandate to conduct traditionally military tasks, that was established over a year ago but had never been deployed. Furthermore, he said the EU police missions are not conducting "real" police work, but they rather help training or assisting national authorities. He said that the EU police agency Europol should have a broader mandate and be able to conduct investigations alongside national police or even go it alone, in all member states.

"Now we have to steer the debate away from institutional matters, such as the treaty and its provisions, to real, practical questions," Altmaier concluded. ■

EU'S OVERALL SECURITY

More investment in intelligence needed

By Julian Hale

Michel Foucher, a professor, former French ambassador and consultant with the CEIS (Compagnie Européenne d'Intelligence Stratégique) opened proceedings by explaining that Europe has been the continent most vulnerable to terrorism for quite some time.

He referred to challenges such as organised crime, human trafficking, counterfeiting and immigration. "Immigration is not a security problem in itself except when it is linked with organised crime," he added, referring to the challenge of including immigrants in local communities.

Foucher pointed out that the problem of organised crime was mainly dealt with at a national level and that there is no harmonised European concept of internal security.

JHA-CUSTOMISED INTELLIGENCE PRODUCTS

Fernando Rocha de Andrade, Portugal's undersecretary of state for internal administration, said that the EU did need an integrated security concept.

He said that the security concept must relate to "the internal threat as much as the external one and to endogenous concerns such as home-grown terrorism".

His impression is that many European countries are developing tools that have already been developed elsewhere in Europe and could be adapted at a fraction of the price.

He also referred to European Commission projects that could be fully used.

In his view, "internal and justice departments are under the most stress in

terms of the civil management of crises or intervention abroad because of the fusion between internal and external security".

Rather than the "decades-long talk about bigger military budgets," he said

William Shapcott says that things had moved on from a post-Berlin Wall threat period to a more complicated period of internal and external threats

that there was a need for "intelligence investment and products that are customised to our [justice and home affairs] market".

William Shapcott, the director of the EU Joint Situation Centre, stressed that he was a "practitioner and not a visionary" and pointed to the delay needed for public opinion to catch up with visionary ideas.

MORE COMPLICATED SECURITY THREATS

He said that what was going on in Iraq and Afghanistan has "a direct effect on the radicalisation of people in Europe and can stimulate home-grown terrorism," adding that things had moved on from a post-Berlin Wall threat period to a more complicated period of internal and external threats.

His job, he said, was to make the case to national intelligence services that the

risk in sharing sensitive information was outweighed by the benefits to member states and in terms of a better EU policy. He decried a tendency among some politicians to delay action in the hope that they may not have to act at all and called for more effort into developing habits that would encourage early action.

He praised the EU's ability to act in both a military and civil dimension but said "we need to do better".

In terms of having one civilian-military command structure, he said that neither would accept the other side in full command for now but indicated that it would take time.

COUNCIL: EUSC "AN IMPORTANT ASSET"

The Deputy Director of the EU Satellite Centre, Tomas Lovrencic, said that, over the last five years, the centre "had established itself as a relevant European Security and Defence Policy institution" and was accepted by the Council as "an important asset".

With regard to ESDP decision-making, he said that "all institutions should be fully integrated into the emerging intelligence cycle".

Concerning the upcoming EU operation in Chad, he said that the centre had been requested by France, the lead country in that operation, to support the headquarters by providing satellite information on refugee camps, for example.

He also said that it was "encouraging" that even member states with sophisticated satellite systems find the EUSC useful and that the EUSC should not compete with member state resources. ■

IMPACT OF THE REFORM TREATY**Lisbon Treaty sets out clearer role for the EU**

By Teresa Küchler

On the second day of the European Security Conference, a platform of experts have discussed the impact of the Lisbon Treaty on European security and set out their own wishlists for new provisions within the area.

Guy Teissier, the chairman of the Defence Committee in the French Assembly, opened proceedings by presenting the results of a recent Eurobarometer survey showing that a large majority of European citizens had accepted that the world around them today is more threatening than before and that therefore a strong common European policy on security was needed.

He said that in addition to traditional threats, such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the world, new threats such as terrorism had become a common part of their lives.

Thessier said that the treaty would strengthen the EU's security policy and make it more visible and continuous due to the fact that one person - Javier Solana - would be holding a position of greater political weight that would be under the scrutiny of the European Parliament.

Romanian Defence Minister Teodor

Melescanu praised the provision in the treaty that allows for a group of member states to go ahead on military and capa-

“If we undertake military missions, it is because all member states think it is good for the world and for the EU. This should be reflected in the financial programme,” Christine Roger said

bility cooperation without the support of other EU countries, saying that this would permit progress in terms of cooperation.

He added that Solana's post would give the EU a “stronger, coherent and consistent position” in foreign policy in the world.

‘PETERSBERG TASKS’

Melescanu also said that the inclusion of the so called ‘Petersberg tasks’, which outline the EU scope for action in peacekeeping missions into the Lisbon

Treaty, and their extension, made the EU role clearer.

Christine Roger, the permanent representative of France to the Political and Security Committee, Council of the European Union, set out Paris's view of the impact of the treaty. She said that the solidarity clause in the reformed treaty was crucial for mutual assistance between member states.

She also listed her wishes for the future for European security, the first being that the EU's capability to organise itself rapidly had to be much improved. She referred in particular to the slow mobilisation of troops and equipment for upcoming ESDP mission to Chad.

“EU missions should be better prepared and monitored,” said Roger. She also called for more financial burden-sharing among member states for military intervention. She said that the EU had a financing mechanism for humanitarian assistance and others, but when it comes to military intervention, financing comes from member states.

Roger said that very often it is the same member states over and over that participate in and pay for military intervention and that cost-sharing provisions should be set out. ■

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