



STRUCTURES FOR A STREAMLINED PLANNING AND CONDUCT OPERATIONS OF THE EU

Abstract

Since 2009, when the European Union (EU) decided to take action to manage a crisis, the Crisis Management and Planning Directorate - CMPD of the European External Action Service (EEAS), under the authority of the High Representative (HR), has performed a civil / military planning on a political and strategic level. With regard to the military aspect of this planning, the CMPD relies on the top-management level of the EU Military Staff (EUMS), whose proposals are approved by the EU Military Committee (EUMC). The CMPD prepares a crisis management concept describing the duties of a civilian or military mission, which is presented to the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and the European Council.

The decision of the European Council to intervene using military force entails the setting up of an intervention force, and the preparation and organization of the mission. Once this mission launched, they must steer its course, adjust the tactics to the changing conditions and make decisions to lead the operation through completion. The EU must have a capacity to plan and manage its operations considering all their operational and logistical aspects. This capability has to be able to use the procedures developed based on the Member States' shared experiences.

However, this capability is currently missing from the chain of the EU's command. To overcome this deficiency, the EU may call NATO's resources, or one of the 5 EU member State resources EU Member States agreeing to provide such a capability or use its own forces.

The feedback from EU-led operations clearly demonstrates that the organization of the planning and conduct of civilian and military operations is not effective because of the long delays in implementation and the existence of poorly consistent groups with insufficient team cohesion. As a result, the response of the EU to emergency situations is seriously affected and the effectiveness of operational engagement is severely castigated.

Capacity for operations planning and conduct must be appropriate to the needs. To complement CMPD's capability, a structure similar to the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) should be established to implement specific procedures for military operations, while using synergies in the implementation of numerous transverse functions within the European External Action Service (EEAS).

That is the purpose of the Weimar initiative led by France, Germany and Poland in late 2010, amplified by the fact that Rome and Madrid expressed, in September 2011, their commitment to the EU for having a global permanent capacity for the planning and conduct of operations, adapted to a comprehensive approach to international crisis. This commitment was also noted in the internal audit's conclusions on the structures of crisis management; the latter was recently entrusted by the EU to General de Kermabon, as part of the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS).

1- Current situation

1-1 Existing structures

Prior to proposals for the creation of a permanent capacity for the planning and conduct of European civilian and military operations, it seems worthwhile to clarify the role and functions of the Operational Headquarters (OHQ) are distinct from those of a the political and strategic Military Staff.

1-1-1 Military Staff for political and strategic issues

The staff for political and strategic issues aims at conducting an in-depth and objective analysis of all the geo-strategic data. On this basis, it develops proposals regarding the use of armed force addressed to the political authority that is holder of the decision. Staff members are assigned to this type of body upon specific criteria, including the ability to understand the geopolitical and geostrategic consequences of the proposed interventions. Military staff is in fact the liaison between the political power and the army; it performs an advisory role for the former, based on its expertise in the field of defense. The military staff of the EU (EUMS) performs this function for the de facto EU when it works for the Military Committee.

1-1-2 The planning and conduct of civilian operations

The Civilian Planning and Conduct Capacity of the EU was established in 2008 and formed by about 60 people. The Director of the CPCC controls the EU civilian operations. The PIC intervenes - under the leadership of the CMPD - in the first planning prior to leading the operational planning and the process of forces creation for the civilian operations. The CPCC writes the guidelines and instructions of the Civilian Operations Commander (OPLAN) and conducts the operation in conjunction with the Head of Mission in the field.

1-1-3 The planning and of conduct of military operations

There are three options to plan and manage the EU military operations. The first is to call upon NATO resources, in line with the agreements called "Berlin plus", NATO has a permanent military staff strength of 12,000 , far stronger than the EU permanent staff available, with only about 200 in 2011. But this solution does not fit all situations: it does not allow cooperation between civilian and military instruments of the EU who are now mainly gathered in the CMPD and the EEAS; the solution depends on a political control that exceeds the sphere of the 27 member states and is poorly adapted to the comprehensive approach of the EU. The lengthy negotiations needed between the EU and NATO to implement this solution (eight months for the ALTHEA case) and the risk of a deadlock induced by a member State of NATO but not of the EU (e.g. Turkey) show the boundaries thereof.

The second option is to have recourse to the OHQ of a "Framework Nation" which, as cited by the EU and NATO, has "volunteered and was approved by the Council"; every operation

conducted by a Framework Nation is led under the strategic direction of the Political and Security Committee.

The Framework Nation provides an important contribution in the operational planning, execution, deployment of forces for the operation, as well as the commander of the operation. This Nation also provides most of the essential elements of the military command and conduct structure, including the core of the operation staff ; it brings support to the system of communication and information; and offers much of the resources and capabilities for the operation. The core of the Framework nation OHQ consists of 42 to 46 people, but the number of permanent staff is often much smaller: 12 in the Cento (Italy), one to two at Mont Valerian (France), zero at Northwood (United Kingdom) and only 20 in Larissa (Greece); yet, there are 263 people in Potsdam (Germany). The other core-members have a "double hat"; in France for example, they are often assigned to the center of planning and conduct of operations (CCPO), in Paris, and are transferred to the OHQ upon activation of the latter. Beyond this core, the staff must be "increased" by the soldiers of other Member States, so called "augmentees", but this question must be solved case by case, depending on the states participating in the operation. But, such a procedure takes time. In any event, this staff is set to work once the Framework Nation decision choice is formally adopted by the Council. The texts of the EU aim to "augment" and multi-nationalize the Nation's OHQ part within twenty days. The criticism of duplication can be rightly referred to this option: why should we keep five European OHQ when only one would be enough?

Using the Operations Center (OpsCenter) of the EU is the third option. It is important to note that the OpsCenter is not a permanent military staff, the structure is supposed to be able to rapidly deploy a staff for the civilian-military operation. The team should include about forty people from the EUMS, able to draft a plan of operations within five days and conduct an operation of 2,000 soldiers within twenty days. But, beyond its lack of realism, this option also has two handicaps: the time required to become operational (twenty days) complicated makes its use ineffective in the case of a major emergency (natural disaster, conflict, like in Georgia); moreover the small size of the conceived operation (maximum 2,000 soldiers) does not match EU's level of ambition in the field of civilian and military management of a crisis. Its major drawback relies on its difficult use in a military operation, which represents a significant part of the Operations Centre of the EU; the latter is permanently busy with the conduct of civilian operations that require military means such as intelligence, communication, etc. Finally, this third option has the fatal flaw of preventing the EUMS from operating: comprised of forty key-people minimum, the military staff can no longer live up to its crucial mission of advising the EU Military Committee, which assists the HR. Following an attempt made under the Swedish Presidency of the EU, General Leakey, Director of the EUMS, opposed any attempt to activate massively the Operations Centre.

In any event we have to set up an "ad hoc" command chain for each operation, something which complicates and slows the process every time. Thanks to the recent agreement on the activation of the operation center for the Horn of Africa, the situation is expected to improve.

1-2 Feedback from: Congo, Chad and Atalanta.

1-2-1 Operation EUFOR RD Congo (DRC)

After three months of political procrastination, the EU decided on March 27, 2006 to accept the request of the United Nations to support the UN mission in Congo (MONUC). From July to November 2006, 800 soldiers of the EUFOR RD Congo task force monitored the presidential elections (July and November). Germany has agreed to be the lead Nation; therefore the military staff of the operation is located in Potsdam.

The operation was finally launched on June 12 just over a month before the first election round, while the UN request end date in December. Several times, important difficulties have arisen because of a poor communication between Brussels and Potsdam; as well as between Potsdam and Kinshasa. These difficulties were also due to the influence of national positions on the Operation Commander and the Commander of force. This operation, according to the official record, demonstrated/underlined the difficulties due to the absence of a permanent OHQ located in Brussels, especially during the decision-making process as well as the lack of interoperable equipment, of secured communications and officers with operational experience within the EU.

1-2-2 Operation "EUFOR Chad / CAR"

On May 21, 2007, the Political and Security Committee (PSC) decided to intervene in eastern Chad and north-eastern Central African Republic. A total of 3,700 soldiers from 22 participating states were involved in the operation aimed to ensure a "safe and secure environment" around the sites of the displaced people and the refugees.

France proposed to be the lead Nation and to enable the Mont Valerien (Paris) OHQ, leaving the position of the operation commander to another member State. Following the withdrawal of a Swedish candidacy, Ireland accepted the position in September. The staff of Mont Valerien was named "OHQ" on September 4; it was reinforced by 40 French officers and from mid-September, by officers from other participating States. The joint action was adopted by the European Council on October 15 2007. Irish General Nash joined the OHQ in October and the full strength was reached at the end of that month. The planning of the operation required numerous missions between Paris and Brussels (177 during October and November). The first meeting on force generation was held as late as the 9th of November, in Paris, five months after the initial PSC decision.

In addition to this very slow the upgrade of the OHQ, and the absence of a designated operation commander for four months, other difficulties arise during the phase of conduct of the operation. The officers of the EMOPS, who had been deployed abroad, stayed in nearby civilian hotels, a solution rather uneconomical for such a long-term mission. These officers were relieved every two or three months. Newcomers must be trained in the working methods and procedures of the EU and prior to becoming familiar with the procedures of the ongoing operation; this rotation of staff has harmed the military Staff's capability. All this argues in favor of a structure in Brussels, with an operation commander designated in advance.

1-2-3 Operation "Atalanta"

Since the summer of 2007, Operation Atalanta, aiming at fighting against piracy off Somalia, had difficulties to be planned within the EUMS, because of the absence of an OHQ and a political mandate. In May 2008, a decision of the PSC allowed the further

development of the planning, with the latter still facing the lack of an OHQ. It was around the middle of October that the UK suggested Northwood for the operation, while Mont Valerien was already enabled for Chad, making impossible for the Northwood HQ to resort to the “augmentees”. The EMOPS in Northwood was initially formed by only 40 to 60 people. By contrast, the ship owners were involved very early in the process and are still present within the OHQ, allowing an excellent cooperation with the maritime world. The British OHQ was gradually reinforced by officers from other participating States; it counts 120 people in 2011 and the average grade level keeps increasing. On the other hand, most officers remain in OHQ between four and six months, something which affects the necessary accumulation of experience. For example, the current commander of the operation is the fourth over a period of just two and a half years.

Along with Atalanta, the EU leads-thanks to its training on legal issues and financial capacity-other actions of regional support for the benefit of the Somali Transitional Federal Government, of AMISOM, training of Somali armed forces, humanitarian action in Somalia, maritime governance in the region, the enhancement of regional sea etc. All these activities conducted in Brussels require strong coordination with the OHQ.

The “ad hoc” nature of this OHQ and its distance from Brussels limit its efficiency in terms of coordination with other actors, and for the maintenance of the experience or the development of a long term vision. However, Atalanta is a real success for the EU.

2-The political context

2-1 Raising political awareness: Weimar and the Five

On December 6, 2010, the foreign and defense ministers of Weimar Triangle’s country members (France, Germany and Poland), addressed a letter to the High Representative (HR), asking her to concretize the opportunities offered by the Lisbon Treaty in foreign policy and defense, and particularly to equip the EU with a permanent capacity for the planning and conduct of military operations. The HR inserted the topic in the agenda of the meeting held by EU’s Council of Foreign Affairs on July 18, 2011, but encountered the opposition of the British Foreign Minister reaffirming that the United Kingdom did not accept such a permanent HQ .

On September 2, 2011, Rome and Madrid joined Paris, Berlin and Warsaw to declare: “*We encourage you to examine all institutional and legal options available to member states, including Permanent Structured Cooperation, to develop critical CSDP capabilities, notably a permanent planning and conduct capability.*”

This structure could not undermine the Atlantic Alliance: the civilian-military operations of the EU involve neither NATO nor the United States. NATO aims for global security. The North Atlantic Alliance has over ten thousand staff members, some fifteen military staff, an operational area reaching the strategic level and a budget of around two billion Euros. The EU has at its disposal only 250 staff members, two small military staff capable of planning and conducting operations with a limited CSDP budget of two hundred million Euros. It is clear that the

European Union and NATO are complementary; something which is further demonstrated by the fact is that 21 states are members of both organizations.

None of the other EU Member States shares any more the single-handed opposition of Britain to a European command structure, because the need has been recognized in view of the goal for operational effectiveness and response times with regard to the cohesion of the Staff's teams. The EU is an organization of multiple natures including political, military, economic and financial. Its role is justified by its goals of crisis prevention and reconstruction of fragile states. To perform these objectives, the EU tries to unequally incorporate diplomatic, civilian, and military actions with political, economic and financial ones. CSDP vests the organization with freedom of action which is essential to the promotion of its values and identity; it contributes to the security of EU's neighbors and consolidates its role in the international political scene.

2-2 The internal audit of the EU

On June 15, 2011, the HR entrusted to General Yves de Kermabon a mandate to audit the processes of crisis management in the EEAS, during the phases of preparation, planning, support and conduct of operations, in order to submit proposals -prior to December 15, 2011- aimed to reduce the length of these processes, clarify the responsibilities, and improve the operation of a structure that was built through successive additions ever since 1999.

General de Kermabon specified for the EEAS staff functions that are essential in any operation: intelligence (about geography, economy, society, military data etc.); anticipation (exchange of information among all the actors within the EU on the forthcoming crisis,), and evaluation of the situation in order to prepare the political decision of intervention or not; planning (strategic, operational, and tactical) and expedition of ground troops; deployment and logistical support. The military chain of command must be clear, simple and unambiguous and the exit from the crisis must be prepared. This requires the identification of criteria for assessing the success of the mission and the collection of "feedback".

Then he (General de Kermabon) detailed: the organization of EU's crisis management services; the coordination measures (such as the platform for crisis management); available information and tools, with a focus on the applicable procedures; he reformulated each department's Mission Statement. (This administrative and financial screening exercise eliminates duplications and improves effectiveness). The General submitted for adoption by the HR,, a description of the EEAS overall function, including its relations with the European Council and the Commission on the issue of crisis management.

Later on, the General suggested an EEAS structure that included a cell for strategic forecasting, a direction of crisis management and civilian-military planning (the CMPD), the CPCC, and a Military Planning and Conduct Capacity (MPCC). This may be the activated Operations Centre of the EUMS, an EU OHQ to create. The EUMS is outside the structure of the CMPD: it relies primarily on the Military Committee, so that the latter can usefully advise the HR on military issues; then the EUMS helps the CMPD to draw the strategic planning in its military aspects; finally, it provides support to the OHQ or the MPCC to start drawing the operational planning.

Finally, the General led a Task Force in charge with reviewing the crisis management procedures that were developed in 2003 and validated in the form of suggestions: they must be tailored to specific provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon.

2-3 Activation of the EUMS Operations Center (OpsCenter)

Since March 2012, the Operations Center has been set in motion with 12 to 15 officers coordinating the various operations in the Horn of Africa: military training for Somalia security forces (EUTM); support for counter-piracy criminal justice; establishment of bodies for the surveillance of the Regional maritime capacity building (RMCB); and Atalanta, whose headquarters is in Northwood. Under no circumstances does the Operations Center replace the real military staff of the kind of MPCC. This is rapidly changing, therefore it is still too early to pronounce on this question with accuracy.

3. The required changes

3.1. The need for a permanent capacity of planning and conduct of military operations.

As explained above in this article, the "Berlin plus" agreements between NATO and the EU cannot cover all the possible scenarios and the activation of the EU Operations Center, in its present administrative configuration, can be considered only for a limited number of cases.

The solution of the Framework Nation also has many drawbacks:

- First, the choice of the Framework Nation can be very difficult if none of the five pre-designated nations play a prominent role during the emergence of a crisis, like in the case of the Lebanon in 2006.
- Second, there is no military staff for operational planning as long as the Framework Nation and the commander of operations have not been designated. This situation led to a delay in the operations that lasted many months in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Chad. By principle, this OHQ' option of the framework nation does not really allow the required reactivity.
- Third, the absence of permanent military staff leads to a bad understanding of the EU's concepts and procedures by OHQ established on a case-by-case basis,; it also leads to a very bad use of the feedback on the previous operation.
- Fourth, the serious problem from putting this option into action is due to the OHQ lead nation has no civil jurisdiction. Moreover, the absence of a centralization of the OHQ with the strategic planning authorities and the Heads of the civil conduct of the crisis may lead to misunderstandings and damaging delays.
- Fifth, the current method leads to changes in computer systems, command and transmission for each operation.
- Sixth, the diversity of chains of command for the different operations of the European Union at some point complicates the work of actors and decision makers (CPS, EUMC, EUMS), and causes serious problems of coordination between the operations of the EU simultaneously in progress.

- Seventh, the current system leads to the multiplication of structures and to a waste of money and human resources because of the maintaining of five OHQ in Europe (staff, premises, transmission system) in the framework nations instead of having a single joint OHQ in Brussels. These reasons lead to put into perspective the often-cited argument of the duplication of resources.
- Eighth, during the political and strategic planning phase, the EUMS does not have sufficient technical skills to answer the specific questions of the PSC about the operational planning.
- Using an OHQ provided by a framework nation that begins the operational planning with a national core element may impact the planning and conduct of the operation. A European OHQ would prevent such drawbacks.
- The Member States that have not deployed officers within the OHQ of Framework Nations at the beginning of the planning phase, are reluctant to engage due to their lack of trust in the information provided. A permanent multinational military staff would also prevent such drawbacks.
- The CPCC has no military equivalent, the permanent OHQ. This situation is very damaging for the establishment of a permanent civil and military coordination that could save much time during the planning phase, as well as efficiency in launching an operation.

So if a permanent and well-developed operations center can ensure the planning and conduct of small urgent operations (evacuation of citizens, etc.), the EU needs a permanent OHQ in Brussels in order to plan and conduct most of the military operations in close co-operation with the civilian capacity to plan and conduct, since the solution of the Framework Nation is not good.

3-2 Proposals

For several years, the main elements of the European structure of planning and conduct of operations have been identified.

Obviously, the EMOPS must be located in Brussels. First, the EMOPS must be strongly linked to the CMPD because the planning depends directly on the work carried out by the CMPD. Moreover, the EUMS' offices dealing with the planning and conduct of operations, the logistics, and the resource management and intelligence can be used more effectively by serving the integral *Crisis Management General Staff* (CMGS) of the EU, within the European External Action Service (EEAS). The creation of the CMGS will supplement the chain of military command, including an OHQ, without weakening the EUMS, whose the political and military expertise is essential to the EU's political actors, to the HR and to the EEAS, while benefiting the operational military command.

With regard to the setting up of the OHQ, a solution that consists in adding staff to the CPCC must be rejected because nobody would be able to know who is commanding to whom and who is responsible for what.

Another solution would be to extend the operations center of the EUMS in order to create a Center to plan and conduct operations (Center of Planning and Conduct of Operations?) (CPCO),

able to provide the OHQ' functions under a new name. However, the mission of the EUMS is political and strategic, but non-operational; creating a CCPO in the EUMS would mix up two levels of responsibility: this is something to be avoided.

It seems that the best solution lies in the creation of a Military Capacity Planning and Conduct (MPCC), in parallel with the CPCC. The MPCC would receive the support functions already existing in Brussels: intelligence, management of information and communications systems, logistics, management and administration of human, financial (ATHENA mechanism) and material resources. In that way, the EU would obtain a coherent organization allowing:

The uninterrupted planning of our commitments on the strategic and political levels (CMPD), Military-Strategic (MPCC) and Civilian-Strategic (CPCC);

- To be free from any geographical extension which could condemn our military chains of command; T
- To benefit from the uniqueness of place for the strategic command of all our civilian and military commitments, and from their proximity to the center of political decisions; T
- To maintain with accuracy the political and strategic planning regarding civilian and military affairs, thanks to the junction of competencies, particularly within EEAS. T

The global approach of civilian and military crises is the reason behind the PSCD's success. A MPCC, by giving back the missing link to the European chain of military command, would improve the way the EU manages crises and conducts its military operations.

The MPCC would include: a Directorate for strategic planning; a Directorate dedicated to the management capability, in co-operation with Member States; and the traditional offices J1 to J9; a *Military Operations Commander* assisted by a *Deputy Operations Commander* who, in case of activation, would be in charge of conducting the OHQ. Permanent staff would be expected to exceed the Staff provided by the five prospective Framework-Nations. But as soon as the OHQ is being created in Brussels, the five national OHQ should be removed for the benefit of the five related states.

Defining the size of an European OHQ is not easy. According to estimates, it should have a core of 50 to 60 people, divided into three different teams spending eight hours of vigil. This planning would allow driving an operation that involves no more than one battle-group of 2,000 soldiers. In the time of a serious crisis, it must be increased to 120, 150 even 230 people, as in the Operation EUFOR-Chad. Obviously, if we need to deploy more troops- and especially more than one component-the OHQ' size should grow, taking into account the complexity of the situation and the subjects having to be treated by staff more than the size of the forces engaged.

Of course, it will be necessary to make sure that the officers of this military-staff are skilled. This should not be a problem to the measure that the member countries have a significant number of officers having acquired a broad operational experience, during their careers within NATO or national headquarters.

4 – Conclusion

The establishment of a permanent structure of planning and conduct of operations (MPCC) is essential for all the country members of the EU. It is not a source of duplication or additional cost (in fact it is a source of savings). The EU must raise its voice and be given the means to promote its values, such as peace, democracy and prosperity, but also to ensure the protection of European interests; otherwise, the *acquis communautaire* is going to be weakened. Every time there is a crisis, public opinion tends to turn inwards, with protectionism only amplifying the economic problems, and the nationalism increasing sociopolitical problems. Challenging the fragile cohesion of the EU imperils the future of Europe.

For the 21 Member States of both organizations, the EU and NATO are complementary. The NATO military resources are much larger than those of the CSDP, but the latter is more competent in the diplomatic, trade, economic, financial, police, judicial actions and the development assistance. The EU's military interventions are organized in agreement with NATO and sometimes with NATO's resources, and its civilian interventions often rely on military resources. Moreover, the UE still has to introduce the missing link in the military chain of command. The establishment of a military structure of European planning and conduct would allow the integration of the staff of the five existing EU OHQ into the proposed MPCC. The MPCC, military equivalent of the CPCC located in Brussels, is essential to the implementation of the CSDP. It improves staff cohesion and synergy with civilian capabilities, and allows for experience feedback, and a rapid setting up of operations after the decision.

The experience of EU operations demonstrates that calling for the NATO structures takes too long and may face opposition from a non-EU Member-State, which is out the field of the 27 member countries' political control. The use of the national OHQ is a source of malfunctions due to the geographic remoteness from Brussels, the delays in implementation and the lack of team coherence. The activation of the EU OPScen for a large-scale operation deprives the EUMS from human resources that are necessary to fulfill its principal mission.

The proposed MPCC is able to complement the military chain of command in the part between the political and strategic levels on one side and the strategic force command of the operation theater. The MPCC's role is crucial for the smooth conduct of the operations and the security of the participating forces.