

## EUROPEAN DEFENCE AFTER 11 SEPTEMBER

During the introduction of the seminar<sup>1</sup>, paradoxes regarding the ESDP following the terrorist attacks in the US on 11 September 2001 were highlighted. A first paradox is that as the US has changed completely, including in its attitude towards (European) security: it is distancing itself from European security concerns. Europe is now forced to take over responsibilities, such as the Balkans, and is therefore paradoxically concentrating more on its original missions. The Petersberg missions have thus gained importance after 11 September. To fulfil these missions, the EU still needs to access NATO capabilities. However, NATO, after having been bypassed by the US, is in crisis. The ESDP thus gains importance but the crisis in NATO also negatively impacts on NATO capabilities, that might be used by the EU.

### WHAT HAS CHANGED? ASSESSING THE THREATS

From one side it was stressed that essentially not much had changed after 11 September, as no new technologies were used and no new ideologies or groups were involved. What has changed is that terrorism is no longer only national but also global, states have come together opposing a non-state actor, Russia has re-oriented on the West and China has changed its position as well. Most importantly, however, the American attitude, perceptions, spending priorities and the way it sees itself have altered most of all. For European security all of this means no more US consultation through NATO and the end of tactical interoperability. In assessing current threats, the importance of solving the causes of terrorism such as poverty and the multiplication of failed states was stressed.

From the other side, however, one could also say that everything had changed, most importantly the fact that this is the first time that military means have been accepted by the Security Council (including China and Russia) as a means for dealing with terrorism. At least as important is that 11 September gave shape to asymmetric warfare, from the periphery to the heart of the US, aimed at as many civilian deaths as possible and an elusive enemy.

For Europe, the most important changes are:

- The blurring of the traditional distinction between homeland defence and projection of forces;
- A continuum of police surveillance, intelligence and military preparedness; and
- A different American ally with a new attitude towards NMD and WMD's, suspicion of international treaties, a sense of complete military superiority and a perceived freedom of action and a new Nuclear Posture Review, although most of this review was done before 11 September and the targets and weapons remain basically the same. The problem with the NPR, however, is the huge reserves that the US keeps, meaning that arms control is basically dead.

What is needed in Europe are:

- European threat assessment and subsequently basing capabilities and defence budgets on perceived threats. A roadmap of crises would be very useful;

---

<sup>1</sup> Seminar on "European Defence after 11 September" was held in Paris on 18 March 2002.

- A different view regarding failed states, which should be recognised as strategic challenges as they are breeding grounds for terrorism;
- An enlarged strategic vision, and most importantly inclusion of Asia in the EU's strategic thinking; and
- An attempt to find a solution for Iraq.

Other issues for the EU to focus on were discerned, such as protection of civilians and protection of vulnerable sites within member states such as oil refineries or nuclear plants and consequence management. Homeland security could also be an opportunity for the EU. A European emergency force was proposed for disaster management, which could be a new Petersberg task.

### **ARE THE PETERSBERG TASKS SUFFICIENT? ADJUSTING THE CONCEPT**

It was questioned whether the Petersberg tasks should be broadened, although it was stressed that the EU should consider WMD's and unconventional threats. It was suggested that the EU needed a new approach, a broader view of the problems and that it should acknowledge the links between crises. This means that the EU needs a grand strategy, more CFSP than ESDP. The war against terrorism is not an Article 5 war, the significance of which has declined anyway after it was invoked by NATO but with NATO subsequently being bypassed. Security policy is more important than defence policy. A new EU constitution is required to protect common values and interests.

It was also suggested, however, that the Petersberg tasks are insufficient, as they are based on preparation for "yesterday's wars". Indeed EU threat assessment is needed but this will prove politically infeasible between governments and should therefore be undertaken by researchers, with participation of practitioners. In this connection, the need for the EU to focus on "tomorrow's wars" and especially take into account network centric warfare was stressed.

Changes regarding the Petersberg tasks would indeed be needed if Europe does not want to just "clean up the mess", which is moreover not without a cost either and moreover it refrains Europe from catching up technologically with the US. The EU has to show more political will here.

However, one could also say that changing the Petersberg tasks is not even necessary, as they are unclear and (intentionally) ambiguous and can be interpreted in many ways. New tasks could thus be added without necessarily writing them down as this is often frightening to certain members. Any task the EU performs would by definition be a Petersberg task. Besides, it was argued, even without an "Article 5" taken up as a Petersberg task, there would be solidarity with a member state in the case of an attack, but this had definitely not been laid down like this in Amsterdam. The Convention will hopefully provide more clarity on these issues.

- The state of the discussion in the EU  
Concern was expressed at the little discussion of these topics in EU defence ministers meetings and it was questioned whether this is caused by a power struggle between foreign affairs and defence ministers. The inter-pillar structure within the EU, obviously, is not very helpful either. Will discussion only take place and action be taken in the case of an attack on Europe? In this connection, however, one should not forget that the US reaction, its campaign

in Afghanistan and the willingness and the way in which certain EU member states wanted to cooperate with the US also had a harmful effect on the EU.

In any case, the ESDP should be prevented from becoming what WEU has been, that is to say having many instruments that nobody wants to use, preferring national options. At 27 the ESDP will be even harder to manage and, like NATO, risks leading to loss of confidence in the EU and the military structure. Coalitions of the willing and task specialisation, for instance in homeland defence, special forces or detection, were seen as the most likely and probably best ways forward.

### **IS THE HEADLINE GOAL SUFFICIENT? ADJUSTING CAPABILITIES**

The 100,000 troops under the Headline Goal were considered sufficient in the fight against terrorism, but a doctrine and threat assessment are indeed necessary. In addition, solving the capabilities deficiencies, such as multiple-rocket systems, electronic warfare, precision-guided munitions, etc., has become ever more urgent. It was proposed that the EU focuses initially on assets that increase our independence from the US. In the short term (2003) that would mean for instance protection against NBC, search and rescue (SAR) and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). In the medium term (2007-2012) that means assets such as mobile communications, suppression of enemy air defence (SEAD) and theatre missile defence (TMD).

In addition, Europe should acquire assets in countering unconventional threats such as terrorism and "warlordism". More emphasis should be put on special forces (of which NATO only had 45,000 for infiltration and forward air control and only 20 to 30,000 for overt operations), as well as forces for data collection, satellite intelligence, sigint and UAV's but most importantly humint.

In addition, preparation against two terrorism scenarios is needed. First, against terrorists with a territorial base, such as in Afghanistan, for which the Headline Goal should be refined. A second scenario is networks without a territorial base, against which it is much more difficult to prepare. Our relation with the US should be properly taken into account so that military cooperation with the US "remains" possible. But, this also means paying in order to be capable of cooperating with the US and in addition, if Europe want to avoid just "cleaning up the mess". It should create its own style of war and adapt the HG to this end, including more use of force.

Lastly, the added value of NATO planning was questioned. Why would the EU want to use NATO planning if not even the US or ISAF use it? Interoperability among Europeans was suggested as the only way forward.

### **HOW TO PAY? MOBILISING RESOURCES**

During the last session there was agreement on two essential points:

- The EU must not necessarily spend more but try to save money and spend better. Pooling, that is to say coordination of services, role specialisation and common operation of common assets, such as the operation of AWACS within NATO, were suggested as possible European measures to save money.

- The EU should try to manage the national declines in defence spending. This comes closest to role specialisation. More discipline is needed as regards what defence industries do for example, including audits and reviews but, most importantly, through accounting for defence. Again, it is hoped that the Convention will provide solutions.

What is lacking is a vision of the future of the CFSP in which the EU is as strong on the international political scene as on economic and monetary issues.

**Maartje RUTTEN**