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Conditions for a European intervention strategy in application of the ESDP and US/Nato crisis management

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I.

Since the „Petersberg Tasks" for the „Western European Union" were adopted by the WEU council of foreign ministers in 1992, Europe has embarked on forays into the wide field of „hard security". The Petersberg decisions were a first step towards European participation in international peace support with military means, especially „tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making", as the decision read. European armed forces have been deployed in crisis contingencies, either as the improvised „Allied Rapid Reaction Force" to break up the Serbian circle of artillery fire on Sarajevo in 1995 or later under Nato command & control in Bosnia, in Macedonia, in Kosovo and since the summer of 2003 in Afghanistan. At the end of 2004 the EU was set to take over from Nato in Bosnia as parent organisation for SFOR.

In IFOR, later SFOR in Bosnia and in KFOR in Kosovo, European troop contingents have been used together with US and other foreign forces from outside the EU and Nato, in particular with Russians, Ukrainians, Turks, Poles, Bulgarians, Romanians and Hungarians, as well as with token elements from Asian and African countries. Prior to 2004 the EU had no direct part in military operations or crisis deployments but in Macedonia, which saw the first EU military presence for stabilization of the internal situation. The assumption of responsibility in Bosnia would change this

European role to a more independent and active one. With SFOR the EU will have to run all extra-Nato/EU troop contingents in Bosnia as well, an extension of its political-military scope for „robust peace-keeping" and peace stabilization.

The road to this end, in all likelihood only the next stage of the march into further commitments of EU forces, took twelve years since the Petersberg conference and just nine years since the incorporation of the European UN-contingents in Bosnia in IFOR under Nato command and the added participation of others, such as the German contingent at the end of 1995. In the meantime, EU enlargement has added Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the three Baltic countries, Slovakia, Slovenia, Malta and Cyprus to the union and hence to the group of EU members, participating in the „European Security and Defence Policy" framework, for which a European security strategy was adopted by the European Council in December 2003. Crisis management by intervention with military forces is on the European agenda, with rules for deployment and engagement either alone and separately from Nato or with Nato back-up, according to the nature, risk and extent of the contingency.

The subsidiarity principle, adopted in June 1999 by the EC at Cologne at the end of the Kosovo war, is to ensure that EU crisis response forces would neither double Nato forces nor detract from Nato military capabilities or pre-empt Nato to act with its own forces outside collective defence, which is said to mean that Nato has „the first call" for the use of military force in international crisis. „Autonomous action" by the EU via ESDP with the „European Rapid Reaction Force" (ERRF), based on „relevant strategic planning", as the Cologne EC formulated the political terms of reference on this critical point, is widely understood to give Europe „a strategic role", which, however, has to be more closely defined in a transatlantic context of co-operation with Nato and the US. (see Esther Brimmer ed., „The EU's Search For A Strategic Role", Washington DC, 2002 with a foreword by Xavier Solana).

Is „autonomous action" meant as an exercise in „strategic autonomy" of the EU, independent from the US and Nato? „Strategic autonomy" has not

yet been explicitly claimed by the EU, but since 1999 it has been suggested, i.p. in Paris, as the political objective of the ESDP and a European military crisis reaction capability of the kind envisaged in the „Helsinki Headline Goal" for a European force under the political authority of the EU. President Chirac at times suggested that Europe would have to balance American influence if not American power. German chancellor Schröder, a friend and close partner of the French president, answered the challenge indirectly, by stating in public in 2004 that Germany would have no part in „Gegenmachtbildung", which means „counter-wailing power" , vis-à-vis America.

This denial was significant for several reasons: Germany had sided with France and Russia in 2002-03 in opposing the American war against Iraq and demanding a „multipolar" order in world affairs. A Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis of political understanding, a new kind of „entente cordiale", seemed to be in the making. This was obviously a common objective in Paris and Moscow, at least in the Elysée and in the Kremlin. It need not become a base line for opposing Washington across the spectrum of international issues and it was unlikely that president Putin, who looks for understanding on mutual interests and co-operation with the US in a renewal of global bilateralism in strategic-nuclear arms control, oil business in Central Asia and a return of Russian influence in the Middle East after the Iraq war, would seek a political confrontation with the American world power. Nor was it ever likely that president Chirac would carry his opposition to American supremacy that far afield as to break the transatlantic partnership.

But there was a risk of alienating Europe from America and vice versa, given the American reactions and the US policy in the Middle East with the ongoing occupation of Iraq and the mounting risks resulting from it and from Arab-Muslim hostility not only towards America but to the West in general. The extreme political reaction in Spain due to mishandling of government information after the terror attack of March 11, 2004 in Madrid at the end of an election campaign, leading to the reversal of Spanish policy and the immediate withdrawal of the Spanish contingent from the coalition forces in Iraq, showed the vulnerability not only of the American interna-

tional position but also of alliance coherence and continuity of commitments.

The political change in Madrid from a conservative to a socialist government and from a close relationship with Washington to a reorientation on Europe certainly comforted Berlin as the European alignment of Spain closer to the French position vis-à-vis the US pleased Paris as did the reduction of Spanish ambitions and the new coalition perspectives within the EU and Nato. However, the question arose as to how reliable a partner Spain would be in the future under stress and threats.

Although Berlin continued to oppose any Nato participation in the post-war occupation of Iraq and refused to send German soldiers into the country under foreign occupation – which amounted to a refusal of any EU military „peace consolidation" presence in Iraq as well – by early 2004 it had become obvious to the German government that the alliance with the US needed be mended and the UN involved as soon and as far as possible, in order to contain the building storm of insurgency and the trend towards destabilization. At the same time, the German ambition to play a greater role at the UN and to occupy a permanent seat in its WSC could only be furthered with American support, even in Europe itself, where Germany does not enjoy unmitigated friendships around its borders or an unassailable position in the EU. The decline of the German economy and armed forces, hence of Germany's international weight and standing in Nato called for a more cautious policy vis-à-vis Washington, even towards the unbeloved Bush Administration.

II.

In order to improve European military capabilities both within Nato and for the European Rapid Reaction Force of the EU Germany with its low defence spending must make greater efforts, if only to remain on par with Britain and France. Therefore both the European and the German positions in the alliance have become even more precarious than before the Balkan crises of the 1990ies: The entire ESDP undertaking for crisis reaction needs much more and more rapid funding than so far accepted by the EU part-

ners. The Afghanistan operation in ISAF taxes European resources and the Balkan deployments in SFOR and KFOR, while reduced in numbers, have become a costly burden while several European allies have troop deployments in Iraq as members of the US-led international coalition, technically supported by Nato assets.

Since 1992 the expansion of US spending on defence, in particular on military technologies and on the operational capabilities of US forces for conventional as well as for nuclear warfare, has outpaced European resources allocation to defence and the American „revolution in military affairs" has reached a point of advance far out of reach of any international competitor, let alone the European Nato and EU partners. Therefore „balancing" US power on the 2004 US defence budget level of about 450 billion US $ is out of the question for Europe. The issue is how European forces can be used together with US forces in combat contingencies, how interoperability can be achieved under the new technical conditions, how „mobility, flexibility, sustainability and deployability" of EU forces (as well as of European Nato forces) can be assured with „interoperability" as the five „main capabilities" recognized as priority requirements for EU „crisis management operations" by the Cologne EC in 1999 (see Lothar Rühl, Bonn ZEI Discussion Paper C54 1999 Conditions and options for an autonomous „Common European Policy on Security and Defence „ in and by the European Union).

The Helsinki force planning goal envisages 60.000 soldiers out of a manpower pool of about 100 -125.000, 300 combat aircraft and 75 naval vessels, plus 188 transport aircraft and 61 transport ships for longer range deployments up to 6000 km distance from Brussels, probably between 3000 and 5000 km for insertion into crisis areas or „force projection" on a larger scale.

This is indeed a „strategic range" by European geographical measures as well as by international standards. In operational and logistical terms ready reaction or intervention forces, to be rapidly „projected" or forward deployed into crisis areas, need ready reserves to replace them by rotation. This requirement applies to personnel, to equipment with spare parts, to

ammunitions, to preservable provisions, to fuel, to medicine and other matériel; it begs for adequate war-stocks with appropriate selections of goods and a pool of skilled technicians to handle the logistical operations as well as a staff for planning and preparation of transports and supply. Communications, command & control and strategic reconnaissance have to be provided with mobile operational head quarters for command & control in the theatre. Above all, the capability has to be threefold, since even with six-months-tours for personnel in a „hot" deployment area instead of one year – the envisaged extreme time-limit for troops – in order to organize a coherent rotation: one third in theatre, one third preparing for replacement and one third in reserve and training.

A force of 60.000 would be capable of fielding about 20.000 at any time, as long as the rotation cycle can be maintained after 18 months. The cases of Bosnia with SFOR and Kosovo with KFOR show that one has to count with several years even in areas, where there is practically no combat situation and, all in all, little violence or disorder, compared to Somalia in 1992-94 and at present in Afghanistan, let alone in „post-war" Iraq. At the end of September 2004 the secretary general of Nato asked for more allied troops from Europe in order to bolster and extend the military presence in Afghanistan and to set up more mobile reconstruction teams of ISAF farther out in the country, i.p. in the West, for wider stabilization in depth. German defence minister Peter Struck, who had coined the phrase „Germany's security must be defended at the Hindukush", declared „no end in sight" for German foreign military deployments, since the conditions in Afghanistan and in the Balkans did not yet allow a withdrawal of international security forces. he Therefore the time span for such deployments is much wider than had been expected ten years ago.

The Israeli occupation in the Gaza Strip and in some West Bank areas of Palestine with mounting Arab resistance points to the same conclusion, although EU forces would probably not be deployed in such contingencies. However, the original idea of swift action and afterwards relative quiet for „peace stabilization" as in Bosnia in a garrison occupation by European forces without much risk and danger of armed violence, has to be abandoned for ERRF operations now and in the foreseeable future.

The escalation of violence into actual war-fighting with heavy arms followed the originally peaceful presence of unarmed humanitarian relief organisations in Somalia within a short period after these helpers could no longer protect their goods and themselves in the interior because of armed robbery and growing fighting between bandits or tribes over the control of transport and distribution. The case of Somalia shows the ambivalence of the contingencies, the risks of escalation and the escalation dynamics inherent in crisis even without the provocation by armed forces from outside. It also shows the inadequacy of conventional military protection of convoys, aid stations, goods and civilian personnel without a strong intervention capability of the type „boots on the ground" with high mobility, superior fire-power and operational flexibility, knowledge of land and people and rules of engagement which permit timely effective use of arms.

Is the EU, are the European governments partners ready for such crisis contingencies and escalatory risks? Will the European Rapid Reaction Force be ready, by the end of 2010, to meet such circumstances if and when deployed in similar situations? In Afghanistan, the indigenous jury on ISAF is still out. The tribal chiefs, some of which are known narcotics barons and others are historical war lords or both, have to be counted with as have „the remnants" of Al Qaida and the Taliban. For the 2004 presidential elections, the US asked for ground elements of the Nato crisis response force – to which it had not yet attached any American troops – in order to protect the Afghan voters in some critical places.

The European allies, led – as usual against American demands – by France, refused. French president Chirac, not missing the opportunity offered to him, countered that the Nato force was never meant for such missions – which is correct – and that ISAF could deal with the situation. ISAF, of course, is led by Nato and largely composed of European elements. Chirac wished to avoid that the European ISAF would be doubled or overshadowed by the US-led Nato force in the military protection of an exercise in practical democracy , with US combat forces around, searching for their enemies. As things stood in Europe in the autumn of 2004, an EU force could not have been successfully deployed in Afghanistan as it could not have been in Iraq or as an „interposition force" in Gaza or Hebron. But

could Nato have assumed effective control of one of the quieter regions of Iraq in 2004, as had been asked by the US ministers Powell and Rumsfeld in December 2003 in Brussels?

The question refers to European inputs in both the EU rapid reaction force and the Nato crisis response force, to allied cohesion and to the reality of the relationship between the EU and Nato in competition for the resources needed to create and maintain intervention capabilities in real contingencies for „autonomous" European „action" in crisis with military force.

An independent „Task Force" of academic experts, set up at the end of 2001 at the EU Institute for Security Studies in Paris and tasked „to select the most likely generic crisis scenarios that the EU could face in the decades to come, to assess the capabilities needed to deal with each of these contingencies, to identify the main current shortfalls and to propose remedies and options for adapting European capabilities" , arrived at the overall conclusion that „even if the use of force is a last resort, peacekeeping operations, including police operations, could encounter a hostile environment" (see European defence, A proposal for a White Paper ISS of the European Union, Paris, may 2004, p. 125). In conjunction with the European Security Strategy document of December 2003, in which it is acknowledged that „the European Union is inevitably a global player" and therefore „should be ready to share in the responsibility for global security", the Task Force concluded further that this must be backed up by „adequate capabilities", hence by „readiness and effectiveness of European forces, crucial to fulfilment of the Union's strategic objectives".

On this critical point, the Task Force spelled out the long-standing deficiencies and the still unfulfilled requirements:

- up to 50 per cent of European forces must become deployable at any given time for operations outside the EU or to face consequences of catastrophic terrorism. This objective should be achieved within 10 years (in 2014). In 2004 only 10 percent of the committed forces within the Union are deployable: European countries (in EU or Nato) count almost 1,5 million soldiers under arms but can only deploy 150.000 troops.

- The EU should be able to sustain the deployment of 60.000 combat troops in operational units for three years. In 2004 they are unable to sustain 50.000 in operation over a number of years, equalling 20 small brigades of about 2500 soldiers each. Prior to its enlargement of April 2004, Nato had collectively 250 combat brigades of which 69 US brigades; less than 80 of those, including 29 US brigades, were considered „deployable", i.e. could be moved with their full combat equipment and logistics for operational deployments away from their garrisons. This left 51 European „deployable" combat brigades of which one third, i.e. up to 17, could be deployed for operations elsewhere for six months with 34 others in various states of readiness for foreign deployments outside or in other parts of Europe. The Task Force concluded that „only 15 to 17 European brigades can be deployed at any given moment; this makes (for) a total of approximately 40.000 troops" for six-months-deployments, while for shorter interventions into crisis contingencies a larger number of the available brigades could be deployed for operations including combat missions.

- For the less demanding „Petersberg missions" of 1992 vintage, that is before the crisis experiences in Somalia, the Balkans, Central Africa, Afghanistan and in post-war Iraq, only some elements of the ERRF would have to be deployed. But „for the most demanding large-scale, sustained combat missions, the full ERRF would have to be deployed. A force of 60.000 that includes logistics and combat support cannot carry out these kinds of missions. To be able to fulfil the most demanding tasks would require at least 60.000 combat forces and, given the ratio of combat to non-combat troops, this would imply a pool of 150 - 200.000 troops" (see EU ISS document quoted, p. 100/101 and 125).

III.

These findings of this Task Force underline three critical realities: First the objective competition between Nato and EU for the same operational capabilities, even if battalions could be deployed instead of entire brigades and the requirement in numbers smaller than 40-60.000 troops. Second the ne-

cessity to provide for operational combat units: battalions and brigades or, in the current terminology at Brussels, „combat groups" which suggests variable sizes but combat strength in arms and equipment, especially in mobile and secure command & control, communications, reconnaissance and intelligence analysis for field headquarters with a first priority, spelled out in the report. Third a much larger personnel reserve in a manpower pool of professionally trained soldiers available for combat, combat support and logistics for the fielding of up to 60.000 troops, than has been taken into account in the „Helsinki Headgoal" as the order of magnitude. If 60.000 combat troops had to be operationally deployed for more than six months, by this count an available organized force of at least 120.000 combat troops and as much combat support and logistics troops would have to be made available at various stages of operational readiness.

The American experience in Iraq since April 2003, when the actual campaign ended, shows that for occupation and mobile control of an unsafe area with only up to 10.000 insurgents and armed bandits a large force and a continuous rotation are needed. The situation in Afghanistan was considered unsafe and potentially explosive, in any case a high risk contingency, by the Nato military committee in 2003-2004. This situation was characterized by a multitude of small incidents but daily losses of life and endemic insecurity for the Iraqi population in the cities and towns, an obvious lack of control by the US forces and fighting in several hot spots such as Samarra, Falludja, Bakuba or Ramadi in the „Sunnite triangle" north-west of Baghdad, the centre of old Baa'tist resistance and terrorism by foreign elements, and south of Baghdad in the Shiite holy cities of Nadjaf and Kerbala by radical Shiite fundamentalist insurgents fighting for power in the Shiite majority and using the foreign occupation as their hostile target to back up their political legitimacy in terms of national resistance, as was the case in parts of Baghdad.

However, there never was any local victory over the foreign occupation forces or any land-wide uprising in spite of the many appeals for support of the insurgency. Therefore, the ambivalent terms of „insurgency" and „guerrilla warfare", used since the early summer 2003 by the US military commanders, i.p. by the commander-in-chief general Abizaid, and uncritically

reproduced by the media, which often equal noise with action, do not translate the reality on the ground: There is organized guerrilla on a large scale, however in a scattered way with an uneven pattern, but no „warfare" like in Vietnam on the part of the insurgents. American losses are not critical with about 1000 casualties killed in action since March 2003 at the end of September 2004, which means around 900 since the end of the „major military operations" at the end of April 2003: For a force of 135.000 US soldiers in Iraq this is a ratio of less than one per cent. In Vietnam the US forces, numbering more than half a million at the height of the war in 1967-70, lost on average about 6000 killed in action per year, 58.000 in all between 1965 and 1973.

The comparison with Vietnam is misleading on several accounts. But in psychological-political terms there is an emerging similarity: The trend towards a spread of insecurity and a stiffening of armed resistance. These are signs of the internal dynamics of escalation and intensified crisis playing themselves out; they show, clearly again after Bosnia and Kosovo, that escalation is not only working from outside into a crisis, as Nato escalation did in 1995 with success to end the Bosnian war, but that it as works from inside out, as it had done before 1995 between Croatia und Bosnia and again in 1998/99 from the civil war in Kosovo across the borders into Macedonia as well as from Albania into Kosovo. Escalation spreads violence and war in situations without foreign involvement, let alone intervention, as the many African examples show, the latest in the Darfur province of Sudan 2003-04, where, however, foreign interests (Chinese for oil drilling and Russian for selling arms to the government in Khartoum) are at work as well.

To check interior escalation of crises and internal conflicts should be the first and main purpose of intervention as a strategy for international security. In order to be successful in a strategic sense in the service of a political objective beyond „stabilisation" of an unstable, chaotic or revolutionary situation or of a transition from peace to civil war or to a war of secession for independence (as in disintegrating Yugoslavia), that is of a set of circumstances which cannot be made „stable" since such constellations are

inherently unstable, intervention from abroad must based in escalation dominance for control of the situation and further developments.

Dominance and control of the situation cannot be pre-ordained by policy-makers, strategic planners or military commanders. They are the result of a balance of forces on the ground favourable to the intervening power or coalition of states, of appropriate policies with regard to the contingency, realistic political and strategic objectives in a reasonable time-frame and the adequate use of force, supported by political measures (or vice versa). Afghanistan since October 2001 and Iraq since march 2003 are cases in point: Intervention has its own politics, meaning that compromises must be made with various political, social, religious and even criminal forces in the theatre. Military action cannot be pursued independently from political operations and conditions. This was already shown to Nato in Bosnia and in Kosovo, it has been shown since in Afghanistan and in Iraq. Military tactics of occupation forces are not completely different from military tactics in general, but they have to be combined with police tactics and military-civil co-operation.

Intervention forces cannot be used indiscriminately as occupation forces. But both Afghanistan and Iraq show that „light forces" with armed „social workers" , as had been one of the favourite European ideas about „peace keeping" in the early 1990ies, will not do. Heavy armoured equipment is not a thing of the past in „asymmetrical warfare". When the situation got rough and out of hand in parts of Iraq during 2004, the US command reversed its 2003 post-campaign preference for light forces and deployed the armoured battalions of the two heavy divisions from Germany to back up the US Marines in Nadjaf, Kerbala and Kufa in the Shiite region as well as for the control of Baghdad and in the „Sunnite triangle" for the offensive operations to take back the cities of Samarra, later of Falludja and Ramadi, lost to the terrorists, bandits and guerrilla groups during 2004 after the premature break-off of the spring offensives for political reasons, which had to do with the Iraqi interim government and the electoral prospects of the politicians, eager to perform as peacemakers and mediators, albeit without lasting success: In Samarra less than 1000 „insurgents" and „foreign fighters" had held a city of 200.000 inhabitants hostage to their guns for almost

six months, until they were finally dislodged at the end of September 2004 by US and Iraqi government forces.

Intervention needs massive troop deployments in order to show force and hold operational reserves ready, to patrol the roads and streets and to exercise widespread control in the country. The US troop deployments in Iraq as in Afghanistan were to small for this purpose: Winning in the open field and taking cities by offensive may need less forces if the combination of protection, fire-power and mobility as well as the control of the air can oppose superior power and quality to superior numbers and rule the battlefields. Occupation of large countries needs large forces, but also force protection, operations security, information, reconnaissance in depth, contacts with the people and police skills. This combination in an order of magnitude that provides for sufficient ready operational reserves and heavy arms back-up is necessary to cover hidden as well as visible risks.

Risk-taking is one of the most difficult arts in warfare as in politics or in marketing. Risks do change and may appear or grow suddenly. Escalation is about changing of risks and hence about careful risk-taking both in planning and in improvisation during operations and occupation deployments. Intervention must be placed on risk evaluation and risk avoidance, as far as possible, but in the last analysis on betting on risks, which cannot be covered fully. This is another lesson from Afghanistan, but much more so from Iraq as it is from the Israeli incursions and occupation in Palestine. In Iraq the major physical risks to troops of the occupation so far have been roadside explosions, automobile bomb attacks and sniper fire from hidden positions.

These risks are typical of terrorist and guerrilla operations, but they are of limited effect on armoured forces and reinforced positions, as long as there is a free field of fire to hold back automobile bomb attacks before they can reach a barrage or defensive perimeter, which is difficult and often not compatible with the political purpose of the occupation as well as impractical for the exercise of control and for reassurance of the population. Military camps can always be attacked from somewhere, if only by rocket and

mortar fire from a distance. But such attacks are seldom critical to the security of the camps so long as there is built-in protection.

Road-side bombs and automobile attacks as well as sniper fire cannot defeat occupation forces, even less operational forces in the field. But they can create insecurity for the public, cause massive civilian losses of life and destruction, hence defeat the political purpose of the military occupation or short-term intervention deployments, which is security and freedom of movement for the population, protection of valuable sites such as oil pipes, water wells and power lines, of administrative buildings and infrastructure. Unprotected civilian engineers, truck drivers, humanitarian relief workers and business people cannot perform under growing danger of being attacked or taken hostage. This is the main challenge to any post-intervention occupation for reconstruction or stabilisation.

As long as the dynamics of intervention are in play and the superior military force over-whelms any resistance – Afghanistan in the late autumn of 2001 or Iraq in march-April 2003 – „asymmetrical" warfare of the stronger against the weaker party suppresses the latter's arms, organisation and options: the asymmetry is in favour of the intervening power. Guerrilla tactics and terrorist attacks cannot stop the intervention nor really harm the attacking army, let alone air force or naval force. This was the case during the offensive of the US ground forces in Iraq from Kuwait to Baghdad and beyond into the „Sunnite triangle", Tikrit and towards Mosul in the north. Had the US been permitted by Turkey to land an army corps in Southern Anatolia from the sea and create a second front for a dual offensive against Baghdad, the effect would have been even more dramatic and the campaign even shorter. Even on one front with three offensive axis from south to north, the thrust of the allied forces was tremendous in spite of sand storms, heavy rains, local resistance and guerrilla-type attacks on the supply columns on the roads. Allied losses were insignificant, destructions limited with only little „collateral damage" and Iraqi losses including civilians somewhere between 10.000 and 30.000 persons killed, mostly soldiers and paramilitary fighters. A stronger and better-led army could have put up a stiffer resistance. But even against are more competent and energetic opposition, the thrust of the US-British offensive would have achieved the

break-through within a few weeks more, however with heavier losses and in fiercer fighting. The problem of military intervention lies less in the combat operations than in the control of land and population afterwards. The situation in Iraq in 2003-04 made the major physical risks to the purpose of intervention and occupation perfectly clear.

Intervention must lead to occupation if the positive result of intervening is to be protected until indigenous forces under stable political authority of the country or region in question can assume responsibility for maintaining order and security. This is the obvious dilemma of the US/British occupation in Iraq and the problem for ISAF and the US combat forces in Afghanistan. The scenarios for intervention by EU forces, whether military units or civilian police or both, must be defined accordingly: The favourite scenario in the EU concept of intervention with the ERRF for ESDP purposes is a rapid and swiftly executed operation. The EU Institute for Security Studies report of may 2004 „European defence" points to time-frameworks of up to six months, however with the proviso of rotation afterwards for replacement of the first deployment. Short time span for action is always the ideal case in all military intervention planning as it is in all guerrilla attack tactics: For the regular military it means 'fast in, fast out', for the guerrilla 'hit and run'.

In the asymmetrical warfare situations between indigenous guerrilla forces and terrorist groups operating from the underground, hidden in the population or somewhere in the depth of the countryside, and the military forces the swift attacker from nowhere will always be at an advantage and does not need to be successful all the time or even most of the time. The military force needs time and space for the optimal use of its own superiority in mobile operations, free fields of fire and clearly visible or at least detectable targets for its weapons and an evolution of the tactical situation that permits the combination of armoured protection, fire power and mobility to impact on the adversary.

The loss of free room for manoeuvre and distance to the enemy in the Palestinian towns and refugee camps is the main reason for the reduced effectiveness of the Israeli army in the position war of occupation with limited

incursions. The same problem confronts the US army in Iraq. However, the American forces seem to cope better with this situation, since they have combined armoured and light dismounted units for street fighting and assault on positions in towns, where the urban guerrilla digs in and so looses its own strength of the swift surprise attack. Asymmetrical warfare cuts both ways: Guerrilla forces and terrorists are not always favoured by it and the asymmetries change with the topography, the light of day and night as do the risks. The night-sight equipment of US forces offers them a distinct and often decisive advantage over the Iraqi guerrilla and the terrorists in night-fighting. It is important, therefore, to equip European forces in the same way to give them asymmetrical technical advantages to balance those on the other side, which would be fighters with small arms, rockets and mortars, mines and bombs made of artillery munitions.

The deployment of armour and artillery, attack helicopters and superior reconnaissance and battlefield information assets, mobile communications and precision-guided munitions can reverse the asymmetry problem at least under some tactical conditions. Operational mobility and fire power in protective vehicles plus air-to-ground fire support is the combination for success with small losses in asymmetrical situations as well as in conventional warfare. Main Battle Tanks are still of much use in contingencies of opposition by strong or numerous forces, even scattered in the landscape or in urban guerrilla situations. However, there are limitations as well: First, heavy arms such as 50 to 70 ton MBT's are difficult and costly to move over distance if there is no road or railway to be used. The Nato military authorities sought railway links from Southern Russia to Central Asia in 2003 for ground transport of the many heavy loads of provisions for the force in Afghanistan. Second, guerrilla fighters and terrorists, that blend into the local background and are visible only for short moments, cannot be fixed by the most advanced reconnaissance assets for effective targeting or even reliable identification. In Iraq in 2003-04 as in Afghanistan „hostile losses" often include unarmed civilians not associated with fighters or terrorists. Third, there should be a proportional correlation between the political aim, the strategic objectives, the tactical targets and the means employed by the military force, which is to the advantage of the intervening or

occupying power: Otherwise, the war can be won and the peace lost – as was the risk of the post-campaign occupation and „counter-insurgency" operations by the „Coalition Forces" under US-command in Iraq.

The combination of lighter and heavier forces with armoured protection and support had not been provided for in Iraq and had to be improvised over many months with time lost and the known effect of the spread violence, crime, terrorism and finally the guerrilla from the underground. The European allies in Nato had good reasons in 2003-04 not to field more forces in a situation, that demanded more forces but particularly risky for all foreign soldiers, even outside the hot-houses of terrorism, banditism and guerrilla activities. In Afghanistan the situation was less dramatic but still full of barely hidden risks for ISAF under Nato authority. The lessons for future EU force deployments and interventions with troops into conflict situations, even „post-war" contingencies for„peace consolidation" or for „peace enforcement" and „preventive deployments" (see the 1992 UN WSC „Agenda for Peace") are simple, clear and compelling:

Overwhelming power is needed for successful intervention with military force, but cannot accomplish the task alone. Armoured force is needed in all contingencies as back-up for the operational light forces that have to do the daily work of patrolling and reassuring. Only heavy forces, which can protect themselves and intervene decisively, support the lighter forces and the military police, can exercise escalation dominance and physical control of the situation. The light, dismounted US forces and the supply convoys with unarmoured lorries in Iraq took more than 90 per cent of the casualties in fighting and by hidden snipers, surprise attacks and roadside bomb explosions. The ratio of hostile casualties to US casualties was never below ten to one and, on average, with armoured US forces in longer or fiercer exchanges of fire often 100 to 1. These ratios and the use of different forces in Iraq have been carefully studied by Nato military authorities as US tactics have been critically examined.

IV.

The provisional conclusion in the autumn of 2004 in Brussels was that European forces must be equipped and tailored accordingly: Direct air-to-ground support by armoured combat helicopters and fighter-bombers with precision-guided air-to-ground weapons and heavy machine-guns, light artillery, mortars, medium to heavy tanks and armoured fighting vehicles, armoured troop carriers with special protection against land mines, mobile and armoured combat engineer equipment and always a combination of lighter and heavier mobile forces from battalion level upwards. As of 2004 the EU could not field such operational forces packages in „combat groups" of brigade strength beyond perhaps two or three with experienced soldiers, mostly from Britain and France. In the recent past European forces have been deployed for „robust" peace keeping and peace making or peace consolidation under much easier conditions for survival and accomplishment of mission than in Iraq or even in Afghanistan. While the UN had more than 100.000 military peacekeepers („blue helmets") in various deployments in 1993-94, the peak-time of its interventions in crisis contingencies, of which only 2,342 Europeans, the 15 EU countries have fielded since 1991 a total of 41.111 soldiers in various peace support operations: 32.288 with the Nato-controlled IFOR/SFOR, KFOR and ISAF, 5.480 in various UN-related international military security missions, the bulk of the grand total in the Balkans: 28.797. These numbers represent personnel deployments without taking troop rotation into account.

What can be deduced from these facts and data for future EU force deployments for crisis response be the ERRF in implementation of the ESDP?

1. While smaller contingencies allow for smaller numbers, intervention capability has to be held ready for swift operational deployments over long distances and at least for 6 to 12 months, in order to sustain an active, self-protective and useful military presence in a risk situation.

2. The air component is essential in all contingencies for reconnaissance, surveillance, air-to-ground support and direct air attack on strong positions, as well as for psychological reasons of deterrence.

3. The naval component needs capability for swift landing outside ports on stretches of unfriendly coastlines with access into the interior (the Somalia problem), which means roll-on/roll-off cargo ships for heavy equipment and assault ships for amphibious operations as well as helicopter carriers and frigates or destroyers for fire support.

4. Special forces must be organized and made interoperable with US forces, in order to serve for prevention of catastrophic terror attacks against Europe with nuclear, chemical or other toxic agents.

5. Incremental – step by step – intervention with small forces at the beginning is always a high risk undertaking, since the dynamics of internal escalation can outpace the possible reinforcements.

6. Use of military force as a „last resort" is politically wise, as long as the military option does not decay or degrade over time while the search for political solutions continues into protracted talks, which offer the adversary or the feuding parties in a crisis the advantage of staging their assets in safety, prepare for aggression and assume an international posture, giving them an apparent recognition and legitimacy in their political fight, staking out claims and finding external support.

„Ultima ratio" or last resort must not be understood to mean that military force should only be employed, if and when „all other means are exhausted". No reasonable policy or strategy can be based on the assumption that policy and diplomacy must first „exhaust" all their means (and the country or populations with them), before using force. One of the most devastating experiences in the policy of „last resort" was the Bosnian war 1993-95, which tore the country apart and cost the lives of at least 250.000 people, while Europe and America were exhausting their political options before intervention. The same applies to the UN. A similar case presented itself in the Darfur conflict in Western Sudan 2004.

This is the political lesson from Bosnia, Kosovo, Sudan, the Congo and other crises theatres. The EU was exemplary in defeating itself and its own political objectives between early 1992 and late 1995 in Yugoslavia with its various schemes of political pressure, sanctions, mediation offers without the back-up by deterrence power and intervention capability. The war raced

on, driven by the dynamics of its internal escalation and the tendency to extreme violence, while Europe had neither a coherent policy nor an effective diplomacy, but no other choice for lack of a military intervention capability and escalation dominance. The latter does not necessarily mean complete control of the situation or the opposing forces. But it does mean the initiative for controlled escalation of the conflict and the power to do so, in order to change the balance of options and bring about a military decision on the ground, on which a political solution can be imposed or negotiated. Bosnia in the summer of 1995 is the optimal example: intervention by air offensive over 11 days and nights against selected targets of the Bosnian Serb forces and political command, general armistice with Belgrade's concurrence, negotiations, the Dayton agreement and the Paris peace treaty for Bosnia with a political reconstruction programme, UN mandate and political authority, Nato military control and IFOR/SFOR all between the summer and the end of the year 1995. The escalation of the conflict by Nato intervention and US support for the Croatians and the Muslim Bosniaks led to the end of bloodshed, „ethnic cleansing" and of the war.

What are the lessons for European intervention policies and strategies? Of the five different contingencies, to be considered for European military crisis response:

- a large-scale peace support operation as in the Balkans or in Afghanistan,

- a high-intensity humanitarian intervention as in Somalia or in Central Africa,

- regional warfare in the defence of strategic European interests, as the Gulf war of 1990-91 after the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait,

- prevention of an attack involving means of mass destruction,

- homeland defence against terrorist attacks, each, even the last one, could lead into major armed conflict and escalate into a case for massive armed intervention in a theatre of war.

Therefore, the dynamics of escalation and the increase in intervention forces have to be considered. Military intervention has to be seen as a strat-

egy for the achievement of political objectives, even if at first it is used as a tactical operation to fix a problem in a crisis and contain the forces of conflict in an area such as Somalia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Rwanda or Darfur. Of course, local and limited interventions with small mobile forces for humanitarian assistance or the protection of relief missions are possible and can be conducted with good prospects of success without the engagement of combat forces. But all crises have the inherent potential for escalation, that can run away if not checked at the start and create a larger conflict. This kind of indigenous escalation usually takes place in situations, where external influence may still be small or even non-existing. The question then arises: Is it necessary or opportune to send a small force to stabilize the situation, keep the opponents apart, if this were still possible, seal off the crisis area, protect and back up civilian mediation, humanitarian assistance, police operations or whatever may seem possible and useful?

It is not possible, to offer a reasonable response in general terms. All depends on the circumstances in the contingency area, on the nature of the conflict and of the adversaries, on their respective claims and aims and on the measure of political interest of the parties in their international relations and on the foreign influence that could be brought into balance. Macedonia on the verge of a civil war offers such an example. European mediation and preventive deployment of a small force to shield the border region from incursions but also to dissuade armed activists from provoking larger scale violence, to limit the growth of armaments and the multiplication of party „militias" succeeded in restabilising the country. Would this have been possible outside Europe or without the distant prospect for Macedonia to accede one day to the EU? Would it have been possible in a much larger country or outside the sphere of euro-atlantic security in the Balkans?

At the beginning of the Balkan wars in 1992 , when the Yugoslav crisis escalated and the composite political artefact Yugoslavia, a construct of 1919, began to disintegrate in wars of secession, European thinking on crisis intervention was concentrated on the use of force as „last resort" only. But force was being used in Yugoslavia and the internal escalation set the pace of the crisis development first in Slovenia under Serbo-Croat attack by the regular Yugoslav federal army, than in Croatia against the Serbs, finally

in Bosnia-Herzegovina between the Bosnian Serbs, the Muslim Bosniaks and the Croats from Herzegovina. Serbia and Croatia, the latter having proclaimed its sovereign independence as had Slovenia in early 1992, supported their respective population groups in the Bosnian war.

During this entire year as well as during 1993 and the first part of 1994 there was no foreign military intervention and yet the crisis escalated by its own force and for its own reasons with ever intensifying dynamics. Only in 1994 did Nato begin to support the UN „protection force" in Bosnia, that could no longer protect anybody, not even itself under attack, by low flying fighter aircraft but not using arms. European countries such as France and Germany supported beleaguered Bosnian communities with relief goods from the air but did nothing to break the siege, a reluctance, that led to the massacres, of which Srebrenica became the symbol in 1995. After a loss of a quarter million of human lives and the greatest humanitarian catastrophe in Europe since the end of 1945 with at least two and a half million war refugees and people forced to leave their homes under threat of death in the „ethnic cleansing" campaigns, president Clinton finally resigned himself to armed intervention by air to save Sarajevo from utter destruction. Nato was given the task of silencing the Serbian artillery from the air. The European allies consented to participate within the Nato structure of „Allied Command Europe" under American leadership. The EU, organized since 1993 by the Union Treaty of Maastricht (1991), had no military arm and could not act on the ground or from the air. The WEU, „revitalized" (a French governmental term) since 1984 in a long drawn out diplomatic process of little effect, could have fielded some naval and air force components, as it did with a small flotilla of warships in the Adriatic Sea, but could not have conducted a military intervention, let alone a campaign in the Balkans. Only Nato could act, once Washington had permitted it to do so and consented to commit US forces.

The case of the Bosnian war 1993-95 is the telling example of the politics of „incrementalism", that is of intervening politically by half without a military back-up and without deterrence or even influence on the warring opponents, then increasing the pressure of sanctions and parcelling out small military forces on the ground under an international „mandate" by the

UN, which did only allow the deployed „blue helmets" of the UN force to use their arms in self-defence when under direct attack. Most of these unfortunate soldiers were from Europe. Britain and France had fielded the largest contingents. Force was not supposed to be applied to achieve the aim of the mission and protect the people as refugees in the UN „safe heavens" under hostile fire. This strange situation of intervention 'à demi' was politically controlled by a special representative of the UN secretary general, whose headquarters were in a hotel in the Croatian capital Zagreb and who had to be asked for permission to use force in each and every case. His part in the conflict was called after his name „the Akashi factor" for the retarding moment in decision making (Akashi is a former Japanese diplomat and ten years later still in the service of the UN). When Nato formed the IFOR/SFOR after the general armistice and the Dayton agreement in 1995 the Supreme Allied Commander Europe put three conditions to the allied governments: Unity of responsibility and authority for the chain of military command over the deployed forces and the territory. Once the mission defined, no political interference by the North Atlantic Council or any government. Freedom of tactical decisions within wide rules of engagement for the use of armed force to fulfil the mission. Three US generals, Shalikashvili, Joulwan and Clark, maintained this demand as Supreme Allied Commanders and US Commanders-in-Chief Europe.

The EU authorities will have to act by such rules if their ESDP crisis response is to be successful. In order to use the military option, the capabilities have to be created. The ISS report from Paris (o.c. May 2004) spells out the requirements for the objectives in case of each of the five generic scenarios or possible kinds of crisis contingencies for ESDP operations. 2010 is a late date, but the EU needs the delay in order to organize intervention capabilities. The end of 2003, at first envisaged, was much too ambitious. The crucial condition for successful intervention will always be a matter of time: the greatest risk is in the „too little and too late" approach. Premature action is not to be feared in Europe, since the decision-making processes in the EU and for ESDP activities are insurmountable obstacles against voluntarist individual or national reactions. It is impossible even for the European Council and its future President to proclaim „Europe at war"

in case of an attack like that of September 11 on America. The national governments and parliaments would first have to concur in the evaluation of the challenge and the risk-taking, then would have to consent to the use of the EU forces and make their national contingents available for operations. For this reason, the political and military crisis consultations are the critical part of the process and time is the critical factor.

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