

**France, the United Kingdom, and European Union Capacities for Military
Action in Africa**

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Abstract

This paper compares French, British, and ESDP military action in Africa. The two member states and the EU have two primary forms of military involvement in Africa: military intervention and military training and equipment cooperation programs with African states and regional organizations. France and the UK have considerable capacities for military action in Africa, as demonstrated by the role of Africa in both countries' official strategies as well as the British operation in Sierra Leone in 2000 and the French operation in Côte d'Ivoire in 2002-2007. The French and the British have also made considerable improvements to their military projection capacities since the late 1990s, especially in command and control and strategic lift. The ESDP, on the other hand, launched two operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 2003 and 2006, but these operations were hampered by difficulties in decision-making, provision of troops by member states, rapid deployment, and command and control. The comparison of French, British, and ESDP capacities for military action in Africa shows that the ESDP is still less than the sum of its parts, and its autonomous military capacity is suited only for low-intensity peacekeeping or bridging operations in Africa. Because of the continuing deficiency of ESDP capacities for African intervention, we should expect to see unilateral French and British operations in Africa to continue to be the primary means for European military crisis management in Africa in the short to medium-term.

Introduction¹

“Europe and Africa are bound together by history, by geography, and by a shared vision of a peaceful, democratic and prosperous future for all their peoples.”²

In December 2007, 80 European and African leaders will meet in Lisbon, Portugal, for the first European Union (EU)-African summit in seven years. At the summit, the heads of state will approve a Joint EU-Africa Strategy, which envisions a more extensive strategic partnership between the EU and Africa. While the new Strategy will cover good governance, human rights, trade, regional integration, and development, a key issue is the increased cooperation of the two continents for security in Africa as well as in a wider global context.³ The agreement affirms the key place of Africa in the military strategies of the EU and of several of its member states, and should be assessed with an eye to the context of the long history of European military involvement on the African continent.

Since the creation of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) as the military arm of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the EU in the Franco-British St.-Malo Declaration in December 1998, European countries have increasingly expressed interest in crisis management in Africa. As of July 2007, two major military operations have been conducted in Africa under the EU flag, both in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC): Operation Artemis in Ituri in summer 2003, and EUFOR RD Congo in 2006. The EU also

¹ I would like to thank the School of International Relations and the Center for International Studies of the University of Southern California for their generous travel grant to research this project in Paris, France during June 2007. In Paris, I would like to thank the American Center at the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, in particular Pascal Delisle and Isabelle Patti for office space and access to the resources at Sciences Po during my stay. I would also like to thank the staff of the library and the Salle des Actualites at Sciences Po for their aid in locating sources for this paper.

² Council of the European Union, *The EU and Africa: Towards a Strategic Partnership* 15961/05 (Presse 367), (Brussels: EU Council Press, December 19, 2005). At: www.ec.europa.eu/development/Geographical/europe-cares/africa/docs/the_eu_and_africa_towards_a_strategic_partnership_european_council_15_16_12_2005.pdf. Accessed: July 11, 2007.

³ Commission of the European Communities, “Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and Council: From Cairo to Lisbon – The EU-Africa Strategic Partnership,” COM(2007)357final, Brussels (June 26, 2007), 5-6. At: ec.europa.eu/development/ICenter/Pdf/2007/Communication-EU-Africa-Communication_357_EN.pdf. Accessed: July 11, 2007.

carried out two civilian police and administrative missions in the DRC during 2005.⁴ The EU's operations at first glance appear to be a new type of military intervention in Africa, previously the military domain of individual European states and the United Nations (UN). During the same period, however, France and the United Kingdom (UK) launched a number of unilateral military operations in Africa in conflicts in Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, and the Central African Republic (CAR), which were in keeping with the more "traditional" type of interventions launched to protect national interests. The France and British operations demonstrated that the two countries possess significant capabilities for unilateral military intervention in Africa, as well as the political will to go it alone where necessary. France and the UK also both made important improvements in their national capabilities for power projection in the last ten years. National military strategies toward Africa remain important, despite both British and French adherence and support for the ESDP. This paper examines the relationship between French and British national strategies and both states' available capacities for military intervention in Africa, and compares the national capacities and military interventions to the new role and capabilities of the EU in Africa, in order to evaluate the extent to which the ESDP represents a major change in European military involvement in Africa.

In order to adequately compare French and British military strategies and interventions to those of the EU, this paper will concentrate on European military activity in sub-Saharan Africa from 2000-2007. European states and EU military activity in Africa fell into two major categories: military intervention, and providing training and equipment to the armies of African states and regional security organizations. The capabilities-based planning system of the ESDP

⁴ For a list of EU operations, ongoing and completed as of June 2007, see Assembly of Western European Union, The Interparliamentary European Security and Defence Assembly, *ESDP: The Way Ahead – Conclusions of the Berlin Conference – Reply to the Annual Report of the Council*, Document A/1968, Report to the Fifty-Third Session, June 4, 2007. At: www.assembly-weu.org/en/documents/sessions-ordinaires/rpt/2007/1968.pdf, Accessed: July 7, 2007.

resulted in a force suited only for low-intensity peace support operations in Africa, and ESDP capabilities are still inferior to those of France and the UK. French and British capacities are better in unified command and control, rapid deployment forces, forward bases, strategic air and sealift, fully professional armies and troops experienced in operations in Africa.. France and the UK also have more political will to intervene in Africa than does the EU as a whole, since both states have specific national strategic interests at stake in the region. France and the UK can go it alone if necessary in Africa, and the slow development of the ESDP rapid reaction forces and the related problems in interoperability and joint command makes it likely that France and the UK will continue to undertake unilateral operations in Africa, even if there are increased general preferences to use the ESDP as the framework for African operations and support.

The next section will briefly examine the literature on the EU and ESDP and its capacities for military intervention and role in Africa. The following three sections will compare the capacities and record of French, British and EU military involvement in Africa, including both military intervention as well as bilateral and multilateral military training and support to individual African states and regional organizations, with attention to cases of specific national and EU military interventions, including France in Côte d'Ivoire, the UK in Sierra Leone, and the ESDP in the DRC in 2003 and 2006. The final section will examine the possible future strategic choices for France, the UK, and the EU in Africa.

The Literature on ESDP and Military Intervention

Since the St.-Malo Declaration in 1998, academics and policymakers engaged in extensive debate over the nature of ESDP, its capabilities and security role in the international system. The literature on the EU and the ESDP is vast, and it is beyond the scope of this essay to

provide a comprehensive review.⁵ It is useful, however, to briefly highlight four major schools of thought about the EU and the ESDP. The first encompasses the group of scholars that describe the EU primarily as a “civilian” actor, and do not attribute significant military power to the organization, or in many cases, see the need for a militarily powerful organization.⁶ The second group is the skeptics who oppose the ESDP project. In a representative statement in the journal *Survival* that sums up the skeptic point of view, Mette Sangiovanni, a professor of international relations at Cambridge, argues that the ESDP and a European military is too expensive for Europe, hampers the EU’s ability to improve its non-military assets, and unnecessarily duplicates resources already available through NATO and individual member states.⁷ The disruptions in Europe over the Iraq War in 2003 also led a number of scholars toward pessimism regarding the ability of European states to come to any major political or military agreements, and that the divergences evident over the Iraq crisis clearly showed that the EU only had limited political will for collective military action in the world.⁸

The third school of thought on the EU and ESDP is the most common, and argues broadly that a common EU military capacity is an asset for Europe’s CFSP, and that the ESDP will be a way in which the EU can project its common values and norms abroad. The ideational approach to the ESDP ranges from analyses of convergences and differences in European strategic culture to critical social theory. In the former, strategic culture, the French comparative

⁵ Perhaps the most comprehensive literature review of the works in English and French from the initial years of the ESDP to 2002, European efforts toward a common defense policy in the EU, and the developments in the WEU and other European defense institutions can be found in: André Dumoulin, Raphaël Mathieu and Gordon Sarlet, *La Politique Européenne de Sécurité et de Défense (PESD) de l’opérateur à l’identitaire : genèse, structuration, ambition, limites* (Brussels: Bruylant, 2003). See also Sten Rynning, “Return of the Jedi: Realism and the Study of the European Union,” *Politique européenne* 17 (Fall 2005), 11-34, for a useful description in English of the different approaches to studying foreign policy and defense in Europe and the available literature.

⁶ While Ian Manners does not espouse fully this point of view, his article, “Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40:2 (2002), 235-258, gives a useful introduction to this point of view.

⁷ Mette Eilstrup Sangiovanni, “Why a Common Security and Defence Policy is Bad for Europe,” *Survival* 45:3 (Autumn 2003), 194, 198, 200-201.

⁸ A good example is David P. Calleo, “The Broken West,” *Survival* 46:3 (Autumn 2004), 29-38.

strategic analyst Hervé Couteau-Bégarie argues, for example, that there are major differences between French, German, Italian and British strategic cultures that impact the EU's capacity to be military active in the international system. He concludes that the cultural differences make political agreement on action difficult to achieve, but that coordinated action is still very much in the range of the possible as there are enough commonly held strategic values among EU member states.⁹ The European Security Strategy of December 2003 also called for the development of a common strategic culture based on shared European norms.¹⁰ In 2003, many authors made reference to the damaging divergences in the EU over the US war in Iraq, but most observers ultimately came to the conclusion that the ESDP managed to progress despite the major differences in strategic culture that led some states to join the US coalition and others to oppose the war.¹¹

The notion of the EU and the ESDP as acting to promote shared European values and ideas for global security and peace stems essentially from the view of the EU as a different kind of world power, according to Ian Manners, "more than the sum of its parts."¹² Thus, much of the literature adopts a broadly constructivist view to explain the military development of the ESDP and its operations in the European neighborhood and beyond. The bulk of the literature on ESDP action in Africa tends to take this approach, and stresses above all the importance of

⁹ Hervé Couteau-Bégarie, "Unité et diversité des cultures stratégiques en Europe," in *Vers une politique européenne de sécurité et de défense : défis et opportunités : actes du colloque organisé les 15-16 juin 2001 par le Centre de Relations Internationales et de Stratégie (Université Paris I) avec le concours de l'Institut des Hautes Etudes de Défense Nationale et du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères*, ed. Jean Klein, Patrice Buffatot and Nicole Vilboux (Paris: Economica, 2003), 122-125.

¹⁰ *A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy*, Brussels (December 12, 2003), available at: www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/csmUpload/78367.pdf. Accessed: July 11, 2007. See also for an analysis of this point, Christoph O. Meyer, "Convergence Towards a European Strategic Culture? A Constructivist Framework for Explaining Changing Norms," *European Journal of International Relations* 11:4 (December 2005), 524-525.

¹¹ See for example, Jean-Yves Haine, "Idealism and Power: The New EU Security Strategy," *Current History* 103 (March 2004), 107-112; Brian Crowe, "A Common European Foreign and Defense Policy after Iraq?" *International Affairs* 79:3 (2003), 533-546; Alistair Shepherd, "Irrelevant or Indispensable? ESDP, the 'War on Terror' and the Fallout from Iraq," *International Politics* 43 (2006), 71-92.

¹² Manners, op cit., 244.

human rights and human security for EU strategy.¹³ Another aspect of the ideational approach that is necessary to mention is the critical theory literature, which argues that the EU and the ESDP represent new types of power and the potential to “emancipate” individuals from violence.¹⁴

The fourth general school of thought on the ESDP is realist theory. The EU and its security cooperation is a difficult case for realist theory, due to its emphasis on security competition and relative power. Neorealist scholars, who include Barry Posen and Adrian Hyde-Price, argue that the EU and the ESDP is the product of the structure of power relations in the international system. Hyde-Price states that because the current international system is one of balanced multipolarity, EU states can worry less about each other and their own local territorial security, and thus have more assets available for “expeditionary warfare and projection.”¹⁵ Barry Posen takes the theory a step further so as to argue that EU states are attempting to balance US power in the system, not in order to go to war with the US, or to threaten its security, but to constitute the EU as a great power with the capability to exercise its power in world crises independent of the US.¹⁶

The realist approach presents some possible useful explanations for the development and action of the ESDP largely overlooked in other theoretical approaches. The major realist statements on the EU and ESDP, however, tend to look at the EU as one entity, and overlook the extent to which individual states act in their own security interests. Thus, this paper will analyze

¹³ For a good description of the field of human security in international relations, see Fen Osler Hampson, *Madness in the Multitude: Human Security and World Disorder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹⁴ A very interesting recent source that takes this approach, using Foucault’s theory of “governmentality” as a starting point to analyze ESDP police operations in the Balkans is the book by Michael Merlingen and Rasa Ostrauskaitė, *European Peacebuilding and Policing: Governance and the European Security and Defence Policy* (London: Routledge, 2006).

¹⁵ Adrian Hyde-Price, “‘Normative’ Power Europe: A Realist Critique,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 13:2 (March 2006), 230.

¹⁶ This is an especially salient point in the aftermath of Iraq. Barry Posen, “European Union Security and Defense Policy: Response to Unipolarity?” *Security Studies* 15:2 (April-June, 2006), 150-152.

the relationship between national grand strategic interests and overall EU interests, and the implications of those interests for European military activity in Africa.

The specific literature on the EU and the ESDP in Africa is largely empirical in nature, and focuses on available ESDP capacities for intervention and the record of recent operations in the DRC.¹⁷ Some authors, including French political scientists Niagalé Bagayoko and Sébastien Loisel, take the specific interests of member states into account for analyzing EU African operations, but do not provide systematic comparisons of national and EU interventions and defense policies.¹⁸ ESDP peacekeeping and conflict prevention capacities are analyzed independently, but scholars generally do not take into account the ongoing operations of France and the UK in Africa. French and British defense policies and the role of Africa in both countries grand strategies are also important and largely absent in the literature. This paper, by comparing French, British, and EU military activities in Africa will seek to fill those gaps, and also to demonstrate that the capacities of the ESDP on the continent must be developed to a much greater extent before it can hope to take over the leading roles of Paris and London on the continent.

¹⁷ The most useful and comprehensive analyses of EU action in Africa relative to the development of its capacities are: Martin Ortega, “Les missions : une PESD pour quoi faire?” in *La politique de sécurité et de défense de l’UE : les cinq premières années (1999-2004)*, edited by Nicole Gnesotto (Paris: Institut d’Etudes de Sécurité, Union européenne, 2004), 79-96; Fernanda Faria, “Crisis Management in sub-Saharan Africa: The Role of the European Union,” Occasional Paper 51 (Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, April 2004), At: www.iss-eu.org/occasion/occ51.pdf, Accessed: July 11, 2007

¹⁸ Niagalé Bagayoko, “Les politique européennes de prévention et de gestion de conflits en Afrique subsaharienne,” *Les Champs de Mars* 16 (2004), 93-114; Sébastien Loisel, “Les leçons d’Artémis : vers une approche européenne de la gestion militaire des crises?” *Les Champs de Mars* 16 (2004), 69-92.

National Military Strategies and Operations in Africa, 2000-2007

France

France has a long history of military activity on the African continent. It possessed the second largest empire (after Britain) in sub-Saharan Africa during the colonial period.¹⁹ Most of France's sub-Saharan colonies gained independence in 1960, but France remained militarily active on the continent throughout the entire post-colonial period. In this way, France's African policy ensured that it would be one of Europe's (and indeed one of the world's) most militarily active state since 1945. France's forward military presence and policy of military intervention in Africa were major elements of France's grand strategy from 1945 to 2007, and will likely remain important for the foreseeable future.

French Military Intervention in Africa

Since 1960, France has launched 40 military operations in Francophone Africa (not including the EU operations discussed below); beginning with the 1964 intervention in Gabon to rescue kidnapped Gabonese president Léon M'Ba.²⁰ France then carried out at least five interventions in Chad, in 1968, 1978, 1983, 1986, 1993, and possibly again in 2006, a number of interventions in the CAR, in 1979, 1996, 1997, 2006 and 2007, three operations in Zaire in 1978 (airborne rescue in Kolwezi), 1991 and 1993, and then twice in Rwanda from 1990-1993, and again in 1994 as the genocide was winding down, and the largest operation to date, Operation

¹⁹ Encompassing present-day Benin, Cameroon (in cooperation with the UK after 1918), Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo-Brazzaville, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. France's North African colonies, present-day Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, are part of the EU's Mediterranean strategy, and not considered technically by France to be in the same region as the sub-Saharan countries.

²⁰ Charles F. Darlington and Alice B. Darlington, *African Betrayal* (New York: David McKay Company, 1968); Pierre Péan, *Affaires Africaines* (Paris: Fayard, 1983), 48-49.

Licorne [Unicorn], in Côte d'Ivoire in 2002. France conducted many other smaller operations as well.

French defense policy and grand strategy since the end of the Algerian War in 1962 has centered on three “circles,” of priorities, the national independence of French foreign and defense policy (territorial security through most of the Cold War), European defense, and the defense of France’s overseas territories and its bilateral treaty commitments and interests on a wider global scale. The latter circle generally meant military intervention to come to the aid of France’s allies in Africa. France’s defense priorities and the place of Africa in its strategy are clearly evident in the main defense policy documents from the 1960s and 1970s, drawn up by Charles de Gaulle and his successors.²¹

In 1994, following the French deployment to the Middle East during the 1991 Gulf War and the difficulties the French military experienced in trying to project significant power abroad, the French government, led by President François Mitterrand and Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, drew up a new defense White Paper, the first in 22 years. In defining the new defense priorities for France, the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the Soviet menace are taken into account, but the main priorities of French defense policy and strategy effectively remained the same as before. In the six scenarios envisioned where France would need to use military force, two of them, “the implementation of bilateral defense accords,” and “operations in

²¹ The three key documents for the formulation of this strategy are the following: *Ordonnance n°59-147 du 7 janvier 1959 portant organisation générale de la défense*, available at www.adminet.com/jo/ord59-147.html; the “Exposé des motifs” in the *Loi de programmation militaire 1960-1964*, reprinted in Dominique David, ed., *La politique de défense de la France : textes et documents* (Paris: Fondation pour les études de défense nationale, 1989), 182-184; and the *Livre blanc sur la défense nationale* (Paris: Ministère de la défense nationale, 1972), 4-11. The latter was written after de Gaulle’s death in 1970, but is generally attributed to Michel Debré, defense minister in the early 1970s, and prime minister under de Gaulle, and is understood generally to be the clearest statement of de Gaulle’s strategic and defense imperatives.

favor of peace and international law,” clearly mandated continued French military involvement in Africa.²² The 1994 White Paper remains the main statement of French defense policy.

France’s military strategy in Africa from 1960 to 2007 resided on three major material factors. The first was the defense treaties signed with France’s former colonies at independence. The publicly available content of those accords allows an African state to call for French military help in the case of external attack.²³ Some states, including probably Gabon, Côte d’Ivoire, Chad, the CAR, and Senegal, have special provisions in their defense treaties with France that provide for French help in the case of internal unrest. The contents of these special accords are still secret as of 2007.

The bilateral treaty network allows France to militarily intervene in Africa with some measure of legitimacy.²⁴ The military means used to back up the French security guarantee were twofold. The first was the base strategy in Africa. France retained a number of its colonial era bases in Africa after decolonization and put French troops on permanent station to deter aggression against friendly governments by external or local powers trying to stabilize the regional or sub-regional balances of power in Francophone Africa.²⁵ The forces at the bases would also be available to intervene in a low-intensity conflict if necessary, or provide logistical support to intervention forces coming in from metropolitan France in higher-intensity

²² Scenarios 4 and 5:

“4. mise en oeuvre des accords de défense bilatéraux

5. opérations en faveur de la paix et du droit international”

Livre blanc sur la défense 1994 (Paris: Union générale d’Editions, 1994), 109-118.

²³ The text of the main defense accord between France and Gabon, signed in July 1960 can be found in the Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (AMAE), Direction des Affaires africaines et malgaches (DAM) 2078, *Gabon – Questions politiques*. “Accord de défense entre la République Française et la République Gabonaise,” July 13, 1960.

²⁴ Louis Balmond, “Les fondements juridiques des interventions militaires françaises en Afrique,” in *Les interventions militaires françaises en Afrique*, ed., Centre d’Etude et de Recherche sur la défense et la sécurité, (Paris: Editions A. Pedone, 1998), 15-29.

²⁵ Jacques Guillemin, “L’intervention extérieure dans la politique militaire de la France en Afrique Noire francophone et Madagascar,” *Le mois en Afrique* 186-187 (June-July 1987), 43.

situations.²⁶ The forward base strategy was extremely important for France's capacity to launch so many interventions in Africa (especially with the lack of adequate strategic transport), and, as will be seen below, also played an important role in the two ESDP operations in Africa. France in 2007 maintains five bases in Africa (not counting Réunion and Mayotte in the Indian Ocean), in Dakar in Senegal, Djibouti, N'Djamena in Chad, Abidjan (Port-Bouët) in Côte d'Ivoire, and Libreville in Gabon. The French military is currently reorganizing in Africa to use only three of those bases, Dakar, Djibouti and Libreville.²⁷

In addition to bases, France retained a small force for military intervention from 1962 to the present, headquartered in metropolitan France and Corsica. The force was generally made up of professional soldiers, many from Foreign Legion units, even though the French Army retained conscription until 1996. Strategic transport was always a problem during the earlier period remains a general problem for the ability of European states to project power abroad.²⁸ The transport problem meant that it was difficult for France to deploy more than a fraction of its total intervention force abroad at any given time.

As part of the 1996 defense reform, France professionalized its entire military.²⁹ This decision reduced the overall pool of forces available for expeditionary operations, but that problem was offset to a certain degree by removing the constraint of the inability to send conscripts abroad, so more units became available for interventions in general. In 1999, the French military created a new intervention force, the *Force d'Action Extérieure*, which

²⁶ Pascal Chaigneau, *La politique militaire de la France en Afrique* (Paris: Centre des Hautes Etudes sur l'Afrique et l'Asie Modernes, 1984), 52.

²⁷ Niagalé Bagayoko, "The EU and the Member States: The African Capabilities Building Programs," Paris: Prime Minister's Office, Centre d'Analyse Stratégique, 2007.

²⁸ Guillemin, 56; Chaigneau, 86.

²⁹ See Jacques Chirac, "Intervention télévisée sur l'avenir du service national, 28 mai 1996," reprinted in Jacques Chirac, *Mon combat pour la France : textes et interventions 1995-2007* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2007), 369-372.

envisioned four combat groups, a total of 50,000 soldiers, for overseas operations.³⁰ It is worthwhile to note that while the ESDP sought to make a total of 50,000-60,000 troops available for operations abroad, France was trying to achieve the same thing on a national level.

France continued to intervene in Africa after the end of the Cold War. In the late 1990s, however, after accusations of French complicity in the Rwandan genocide,³¹ and the fall of Mobutu's Zaire in 1997, it was thought that the era of French interventions in Africa was at an end. That turned out to be a false assumption, however, as France burst back onto the African scene in 2002 with its intervention in Côte d'Ivoire.

This paper will not go into the details of the Ivoirian crisis, but will highlight the French capacity for unilateral military intervention demonstrated in late 2002. On September 19, 2002, the Ivoirian military mutinied against the democratically-elected government of Laurent Gbagbo, and the crisis rapidly spread into a national rebellion and rebel forces seized the northern half of the country.³² Gbagbo then asked France for help under the defense accords on September 21.³³ On September 22, French Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie announced that France was reinforcing the garrison at Abidjan in order to protect French and other foreign citizens in Côte d'Ivoire.³⁴ French troops flew in from other bases in Gabon, Senegal and Chad, and moved into the center of Côte d'Ivoire to protect and evacuate citizens. The French reinforcement and move

³⁰ See the *Projet de loi de programmation militaire 2003-2008*. Fiche n^o20: Présence à l'étranger des forces militaires françaises : effectifs et missions (Paris: Ministère de la Défense, September 11, 2002), 86-87.

³¹ France intervened in Rwanda twice in the 1990s, in 1990-1993, and in August 1994. See the full Human Rights Watch report for a discussion of the charges leveled against the French that included aid to the Hutu génocidaires at www.hrw.org/reports/1995/Rwanda1.htm.

³² Christian Bouquet, *Géopolitique de la Côte d'Ivoire : le désespoir de Kourouma* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2005), 108-110.

³³ Ibid, 108-109.

³⁴ "Communiqué du ministère de la Défense – Renforcement du dispositif militaire stationné à Abidjan, 22 Septembre, 2002," *La Politique Etrangère de la France : Textes et Documents, Septembre-Octobre 2002* (Paris: Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 2002), 141.

inland marked the beginning of Operation Licorne [Unicorn].³⁵ By October 3, France had moved beyond a rescue operation and established a military presence in the center of the country, when Foreign Legion reinforcements were brought French troop levels in Côte d'Ivoire up to 1000 men, within just fourteen days of the start of the crisis.³⁶

After a failed attack by Gbagbo's national Ivoirian forces in October, and the beginning of a second rebellion in the west of the country in November, France increased its presence to 2,500 troops to maintain a cease-fire line running across the center of the country.³⁷ France then tried to broker a peace agreement between the warring parties near Paris in January 2003, which formalized the cease-fire line, and brought in troops from the UN, and the regional security organization, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to help monitor the line.³⁸ France also went to the UN in February 2003 to get a formal resolution from the Security Council to maintain the cease-fire line.³⁹

Much has been said about the new "multilateral" approach of the French intervention in Côte d'Ivoire, and the change it represented relative to earlier French military policy in Africa.⁴⁰ It was to some degree a new approach, as France cooperated with the regional security organization and sought a UN Resolution (though there was a precedent for that in the 1994 intervention in Rwanda). It should be noted, however, that France intervened unilaterally well before seeking outside help, and ultimately deployed 4,000 soldiers on the ground under

³⁵ Jean-Pierre Tuquoi, "Côte d'Ivoire : des troupes françaises ont été dépêchées en renfort et s'installent dans le pays," *Le Monde* (September 24, 2002); Bouquet, 112.

³⁶ Jean Guisnel, "Les forces françaises entre deux feux," *Le Point* (October 3, 2002).

³⁷ Bouquet, 113-115.

³⁸ "L'accord de Linas-Marcoussis," *Jeune Afrique* 2195 (February 2, 2003), 70-72.

³⁹ See United Nations Security Council Resolution 1464, February 4, 2003, at www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutions03.html.

⁴⁰ See Magelan Omballa, "La politique africaine de la France : ruptures et continuités," *Questions internationales* 5 (January-February 2004), 54-65; Jean-Marc Chataigner, "Principes et réalités de la politique africaine de la France," *Afrique contemporaine* 220:4 (2006), 247-263; and Hewane Serequeberhan, "Le reengagement français dans les conflits africains et le défi ivoirien," *Annuaire français de relations internationales* 6 (2005), 323-339.

independent French command. France set the conditions for a later peacekeeping force by stabilizing the situation with sufficient rapid force and firepower.

France still maintains its force of over 3,500 soldiers in Côte d'Ivoire as of summer 2007. In March 2007, Gbagbo and the rebels met in Burkina Faso to hammer out a power-sharing agreement to end the crisis and dismantle the cease-fire line. French troops remain on the ground in force despite the agreement.⁴¹ France has maintained a major force abroad in Côte d'Ivoire for five years, notwithstanding other military commitments in Chad, the DRC, Lebanon, and Bosnia. Operation Licorne was an impressive display of French expeditionary capabilities and France's ability to intervene with forces capable of the whole spectrum of operations from war-fighting to peacekeeping and to maintain them on the ground for the long-term.

France continues to intervene elsewhere in Africa as well. In 2006, French aircraft likely attacked rebel targets in Chad (an operation denied by the French government) where France has taken more of an active military role since early 2006 to prevent the spillover of conflict from neighboring Darfur.⁴² In October 2006, France helped troops in the Central African Republic recover the strategic northern town of Birao and its airbase after an incursion by Sudanese rebels. This operation was particularly notable for the extensive use of air strikes by French ground attack aircraft based in N'Djamena. On March 6, 2007, in the first French airborne operation in Africa since 1978, 200 Foreign Legion soldiers parachuted into Birao to retake it after a renewed Darfur-based rebel offensive.⁴³ In the absence of any other effective international action in the region, France acted unilaterally to prevent the Darfur situation from destabilizing neighboring countries.

⁴¹ "Ivory Coast rebels, army set to deploy in buffer zone," *Agence-France-Presse* (April 26, 2007).

⁴² "Tchad : la France dément les accusations d'intervention militaire," *Le Monde* (April 13, 2006).

⁴³ Jean-Dominique Merchet, "Les paras français ont sauté à la frontière du Darfour," *Libération* (March 23, 2007).

France clearly believes that military intervention in Africa is in its national interests, and developed a significant range of capacities over 45 years to carry out expeditionary operations on the continent. The base system deters conflicts, provides an early-warning system, close contact with African leaders, logistic support for operations, and makes up for France's deficiencies in strategic transport by providing a network of airbases that eliminate some of the need for longer-range aircraft. Over time, France also developed expeditionary command structures and significant metropolitan intervention capabilities, and has soldiers, especially in the Legion, with extensive knowledge and experience in operating in Africa. Thus, France has considerable capacities to conduct multiple unilateral military operations in Africa across the spectrum of high-intensity and low-intensity operations. France also has the political will to intervene in Africa, as exemplified by the role of Africa in French strategy and the frequency of French operations on the continent. One problem, however, that France has in operating in Africa is its political image after Rwanda, and this issue appeared in the lead up to Operation Artemis in the DRC in 2003, discussed in the ESDP section below.

French Training Programs in Africa – RECAMP

It is useful to touch briefly on the active French training and equipment program in Africa, *Renforcement des capacités africaines au maintien de la paix* (RECAMP).⁴⁴ France launched RECAMP in December 1997, which was intended to provide training and equipment for African armies for local crisis management in their own regions. RECAMP is a multilateral approach to building African capacities, especially in its close work with ECOWAS, but much of

⁴⁴ Reinforcement of African Peacekeeping Capacities

the specific training and provision and equipment provision are still carried out on a bilateral basis.⁴⁵

Under RECAMP, France set up four training institutions in Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, and Ghana (an Anglophone country), to train African officers, and also made it easier for African officers to enter training schools in metropolitan France.⁴⁶ Major joint Franco-African exercises also take place on a two-year cycle.⁴⁷

Initially, RECAMP was not very successful in building up African capacities to deal with their own crises. Niagalé Bagayoko, a French political scientist and expert on France in Africa, argued in 2007, however, that the program improved from 2005 on as it went beyond the “tactical level,” and became more involved in working to improve the crisis management capacities of the nascent African Union (AU), which was part of the ESDP’s policy as well.⁴⁸ Bagayoko further claims that RECAMP was a way in which France could “legitimize its interventions,” as France was much more militarily active in Africa after Côte d'Ivoire in 2002, and needed an international framework in which to operate.⁴⁹

France has tried hard to bring RECAMP into the ESDP framework, even offering to open up its permanent African bases to troops from the EU member states. As of 2007, however, the other EU states showed little interest in contributing assets to the French program.⁵⁰ The UK collaborated some with the French on RECAMP, but the British generally prefer to provide

⁴⁵ Niagalé Bagayoko-Penone, *Afrique : les stratégies françaises et américaine* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2003), 471-472. See also: Olivier de Ceviris, “Pour que Recamp ne rime plus avec décampe,” *Défense nationale* 59 (March 2003), 80.

⁴⁶ Etat-major des armées, *Concept de renforcement des capacités africaines au maintien de la paix (R.E.C.A.M.P.)*, N°970/DEF/EMP.1/NP (September 21, 2004), 7-9. Available at: www.recamp4.org/telechargement/Concept_RECAMP.pdf.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 9.

⁴⁸ Bagayoko, “The EU and the Member States,” 4-5.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 5.

⁵⁰ Sébastien Bergeon, “Vers une européanisation de la politique de sécurité et de défense de la France en Afrique?” *Défense nationale* 63:1 (January 2007), 58-60.

equipment and training only on a bilateral basis.⁵¹ France's motives in trying to get the ESDP on board with RECAMP are twofold, according to Bagayoko, to:

“ - Reduce the cost of French engagement in Africa; and
 - Gain a European legitimacy, when French military intervention is needed.”⁵²

So far, however, France has had little success in getting other Europeans to support RECAMP, likely because other EU member states do not want to become entangled in or support French national military policy in Africa.

France was the most active outside state in Africa since 1960, and while it made some efforts to adopt a more multilateral approach from the late 1990s on and supports the ESDP's operations on the continent, the French generally chose to act unilaterally. France tended to intervene in Africa to protect its own national interests and the regional balance of power in strategic states, rather than acting on humanitarian impulses or according to other ideational factors. France, however, was not the only important EU member to have a significant national military policy in Africa, and in the following section, we will consider recent British national military activity in Africa.

The United Kingdom

The UK had the largest colonial empire on the African continent (and in the world). After 1945, when colonial revolts broke out in many different parts of the empire, British military forces were heavily involved in fighting the insurrections, and devoted massive resources and manpower to expeditionary operations in the 1950s and early 1960s.⁵³ In the early

⁵¹ Faria, 21.

⁵² Bagayoko, “The EU and the Member States,” 5.

⁵³ The UK was involved in a number of conflicts in the 1950s and 1960s, including Kenya, Malaya, Borneo, Aden/Yemen, Oman, Kuwait. There is a large literature that deals with many of these conflicts, which I will not outline here, but two useful overviews are: Field Marshal Lord Carver, *Britain's Army in the 20th Century* (London:

1960s, however, it began to become clear to British officials that Britain was pursuing an untenable imperial strategy and suffering from overstretch of its available forces.⁵⁴

Most of Britain's African colonies became independent between 1960 and 1964. In 1964, the UK undertook its last major military intervention in Africa until Sierra Leone in 2000. On January 11, 1964, military units in Zanzibar revolted and overthrew the local government. Over the course of the following three weeks, military units mutinied in Tanganyika, Kenya and Uganda. The presidents of the newly independent African states asked for British help to resolve the situation, and British forces intervened to stop the mutinies and preserve the local powers in place. It was a highly successful operation, and neither side suffered large casualties.⁵⁵ The 1964 intervention, however, was the last British military intervention in Africa until Sierra Leone in May 2000.

The Development of British Expeditionary Capability and Doctrine

The UK, unlike France, did not attempt to maintain an active military presence in Africa following decolonization, though it did establish bilateral training and equipment programs in several Anglophone states. During the 1970s, the UK moved away from its earlier expeditionary strategy to concentrate on the defense of Europe in the face of the Soviet threat. Cost became the major determining factor for British defense developments, and power projection and the ability to fight wars outside of Europe were seen as obsolete, unnecessary, and not worth the cost.⁵⁶

Macmillan, 1998), esp. 312-445; and John Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency: From Palestine to Northern Ireland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002).

⁵⁴ Phillip Darby, *British Defence Policy East of Suez, 1947-1968* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 223.

⁵⁵ Christopher MacRae and Tony Laurence, "The 1964 Tanganyika Rifles Mutiny and the British Armed Intervention that Ended It," *RUSI Journal* 152:2 (April 2007), 96-100; Darby, 238-241.

⁵⁶ Andrew Dorman, "Crises and Review in British Defence Policy," in *Britain and Defence 1945-2000: A Policy Re-evaluation*, ed., Stuart Croft, Andrew Dorman, Wyn Rees and Matthew Uttley, (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 18.

The UK drastically changed its strategy after Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands in April 1982. A combined British land and naval force overcame huge problems of distance and supply to decisively defeat the Argentine land and sea forces. The Falklands War made the UK a global player again for the first time in over a decade.⁵⁷ According to Lawrence Freedman, “The military [in 1982] had re-established itself as a reliable and respected instrument of national policy,” as the British military performed much better than expected in its newly reconstituted global role.⁵⁸

After the Falklands and into the 1990s, the UK concentrated much of its military efforts on improving its capabilities for expeditionary operations. At the same time, the UK acknowledged that overseas military operations would need to be based on joint action among the services within the British military establishment, and that British military interventions were also taking on a more multilateral character.⁵⁹ The experiences of operations in the Persian Gulf in 1991, Bosnia after 1995, and operations in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 were examples of this “new” post-Cold War multilateral type of expeditionary operations.

There were significant problems to overcome before Britain could field a truly significant force for power projection abroad, and British defense doctrine and policy worked in the 1990s to modify British force structure for a global strategy.⁶⁰ In 1994, the British military set up a Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ) to coordinate operations between the British military services and the Ministry of Defense.⁶¹ In 1998, under the new Strategic Defence Review

⁵⁷ Wyn Rees, “Britain’s Contribution to Global Order,” in Dorman, et al., 41.

⁵⁸ Lawrence Freedman, “Britain at War: From the Falklands to Iraq,” *RUSI Journal* 151:1 (February 2006), 11-12.

⁵⁹ Major-General A.A. Milton, “British Defence Doctrine and the British Approach to Military Operations,” *RUSI Journal* 146:6 (December 2001), 43.

⁶⁰ In 1991, for example, the UK had to take apart many of its armored forces stationed in Germany to provide adequate spare parts for the maintenance of the single armored division operating in the Gulf. Wyn Rees, “Britain’s Contribution to Global Order,” in Croft, et al., 42.

⁶¹ Vice Admiral Sir Ian Garnett, “PJHQ – The Heart of UK Defence Capability,” *RUSI Journal* 145:2 (April 2000), 8.

(SDR), a Joint Rapid Reaction Force was created to launch and sustain large-scale expeditionary operations.⁶²

The 1998 Strategic Defence Review was the most important British defense policy statement since the end of the Cold War. The SDR and its 2002 addition, “The Strategic Defence Review: A New Chapter,” describe the missions of all the British forces as well as the new force structure to meet the requirements of the new missions. The SDR reflects the internationalist stance of the Labour Party that came into power in 1997, and in particular Prime Minister Tony Blair’s worldview, in its emphasis on British “responsibilities in the world,” and its aim for the British military “to be a force for good.”⁶³

The SDR laid out three major priorities for British military activity. The first was the security of the EU, and the primacy of NATO assets for European security (the SDR was written prior to the St.-Malo meeting and the inauguration of ESDP), security in the Gulf and Middle East, and protecting and promoting order, freedom, democracy and prosperity overseas.⁶⁴ Britain’s military policy in Africa potentially applies in four of the eight articulated missions for British defense in the SDR, including “defence diplomacy, support to wider British interests, peace support and humanitarian operations, and regional conflict outside the NATO area.”⁶⁵

As for capabilities to achieve the UK’s defense missions abroad, it is useful to cite the following excerpt from the SDR:

“A...broad range of capabilities is likely to be required to meet contingencies which may arise from our direct security interests and from our wider international responsibilities. In each case we could find ourselves in operations involving modern conventional warfare. Moreover, only forces equipped and

⁶² Garnett, 8.

⁶³ *Strategic Defence Review*, Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Defence by Command of Her Majesty (July 1998), 7. At: www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/65F3D7AC-4340-4119-93A2-20825848E50E/0/sdr1998_complete.pdf. Accessed: July 11, 2007.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 15-17.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 19.

trained for warfighting will have the range of specific capabilities – as well as the deterrent effect – to be effective across the full range of peace support and humanitarian operations.”⁶⁶

As we will see below, this is a much different conception than that of the ESDP for peace operations, as the ESDP does not emphasize the need for capacities across the full spectrum of warfare from peacekeeping to warfighting.

Finally, the SDR lays out the number of conflicts that the UK can engage in at one time. Northern Ireland is always a priority operation,⁶⁷ and along with that commitment and the garrisons in other overseas bases, the SDR states that the UK could fight in one major international crisis requiring an armored division, or undertake a more extended deployment with fewer forces. If the UK did not have to engage in warfighting in the former, it could engage in another substantial crisis that did not involve warfighting.⁶⁸ In the wake of Sierra Leone and Afghanistan, the new chapter of the SDR in 2002 stated that the UK needs to be able to participate in several small operations at once, and therefore needs very rapid deployment capability.⁶⁹

The UK's Military Intervention in Sierra Leone

On May 9, 2000, British national military forces intervened unilaterally in Africa for the first time since 1964. The target state was the former British colony of Sierra Leone, a diamond-rich, small state on the coast of West Africa, which had been embroiled in civil war since 1991. The 1990s saw the interventions of ECOWAS soldiers, primarily Nigerian, the South African

⁶⁶ *Strategic Defence Review*, 29.

⁶⁷ On July 30, 2007, however, Operation Banner in Northern Ireland will officially come to an end, and while a 5,000 man garrison will remain, British commitments there will be significantly less.

⁶⁸ *Strategic Defence Review*, 33.

⁶⁹ *The Strategic Defence Review: A New Chapter*, Cm 5566, Vol. 1 (July 2002), 14-19. At: www.comw.org/rma/fulltext/0207sdrvoll.pdf. Accessed: July 11, 2007.

mercenary company Executive Outcomes, who effectively ran the country for a brief period in 1995 and 1996, and finally the UN beginning in 1998.⁷⁰

In the week of May 2, 2000, as many of 500 troops from the UN peacekeeping force, UNAMSIL, were kidnapped by Sierra Leone's rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The rebels then attacked the capital, Freetown.⁷¹ The UK responded to the UN's request for aid, and rapidly deployed substantial forces, which included paratroopers, commandos, and air and sea support to rescue UN troops as well as evacuate foreign citizens.⁷² The British force totaled 700 troops.⁷³ British troops remained on the ground to help the UN throughout the course of 2000, though it was reduced to 200 troops in June 2000 after the main threats to Freetown and the UN forces had passed.⁷⁴ Britain at that point began to train Sierra Leone's army to withstand any further rebel attacks, and thus played a major part in helping to lower the intensity of the civil war and end the main threats to the Sierra Leonean government.⁷⁵

The British operation in summer 2000 resembled many previous French operations in Africa aimed at evacuating foreign nationals or, as in the case of Côte d'Ivoire, providing necessary military support to the international peacekeeping forces in place. A small number of British forces were far more effective than the ill-equipped and badly trained UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone, which floundered in its operation, despite its numerical advantage.⁷⁶ Unlike the

⁷⁰ See Adekaye Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 81-101, for a concise summary of the conflict and the role of various outside forces.

⁷¹ Trevor Findlay, *The Use of Force in UN Peace Operations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 299-300.

⁷² *Ibid*, 301.

⁷³ To contrast the effectiveness of the UN peacekeepers and the British troops on the ground, the UN had 17,500 troops in Sierra Leone, twenty times the British force, yet the UN was unable to make progress in ending the war until the British troops unilaterally intervened. John Hirsch, "War in Sierra Leone," *Survival* 43:3 (Autumn 2001), 152-153.

⁷⁴ Findlay, 309.

⁷⁵ Hirsch, 153

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 157.

French in Côte d'Ivoire, however, the unilateral British operation was not a part of a long-term active military strategy in Africa.

Why then, was there a British operation in Sierra Leone? The answer lies in the foreign and defense policy of the Labour government, and the new modifications to British capacities for military intervention abroad. Tony Blair believed that the UK needed to be more interventionist, and stated in 2000 that "Britain's and Europe's long-term interests in Africa are best served, if we intervene, but not excessively, but to do what we can to save African nations from barbarism and dictatorship."⁷⁷ There was also a general sense among military experts in the UK during the same period that British military operations needed to take into account humanitarian, moral and ethical concerns, and that the Sierra Leone operation fit in well into that strategic view.⁷⁸ At the same time, there was an acknowledgement that it was necessary to demonstrate significant striking power across the conflict spectrum to promote Britain's worldwide interests outlined in the SDR.⁷⁹

As of the time of writing, it is seven years since the operation in Sierra Leone, and the UK has not intervened again in Africa (excepting in Operation Artemis in the DRC in 2003). It could be argued that Sierra Leone was an exception to the rule, and that the UK has no intention of getting militarily involved in Africa again. This assessment would be in error, however, for a number of reasons. First, France asked for British help and got it in Operation Artemis in the DRC in summer 2003. Second, a large percentage of British military forces available for overseas operations are tied down in Iraq and Afghanistan. The two operations in the Middle East and South Asia led to general overstretch in the British military, and there are currently few

⁷⁷ Freedman, 13-14.

⁷⁸ Air Vice-Marshal G.L. Tarry, "Future British Operations," *RUSI Journal* 146:1 (February 2001), 8-12.

⁷⁹ Colonel J.P.G. Wathen, "Humanitarian Operations: The Dilemma of Intervention," *RUSI Journal* 146:4 (August 2001), 18-22.

available British forces for contingency operations in Africa.⁸⁰ Third, the UK is still very much preoccupied with events in Africa. Tony Blair, in a January 2007 speech, mentioned that the UK still needs to be ready to intervene abroad to protect its interests and values, and made specific reference to Sierra Leone, where British troops remain. He also emphasized that British troops need to be able to operate across the full spectrum of warfare from peacekeeping to warfighting.⁸¹ Fourth, while the UK did not intervene in Africa unilaterally between 2000 and 2007, it maintains a number of military cooperation programs with African states.

British Military Training in Africa

Britain established several bilateral training programs in Africa with Anglophone countries in the 1970s, including Ghana, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and Kenya, called British Military Advisory and Training Teams (BMATTs).⁸² In the 1990s, the programs began to focus more on increasing African peacekeeping capacities, and became part of the UK African Peacekeeping Training Support Programme.⁸³ The UK also set up a general fund for preventing conflicts in Africa in 2001.⁸⁴

The training program in Sierra Leone continued as well, following the British operation there, and the UK provides military equipment to the government military. This is unusual, as the UK, unlike France, does not generally try to build up the capacities of African countries by

⁸⁰ Air Marshal Sir Timothy Gordon and General Sir David Rambotham, "About Face: The British Armed Forces – Which Way to Turn?" *RUSI Journal* 149:2 (April 2004), 10-15.

⁸¹ Tony Blair, "Defense Perspectives: Defending the United Kingdom and its Interests," *RUSI Journal* 152:1 (February 2007), 15.

⁸² Bagayoko, "The EU and the Member States," 6.

⁸³ Faria, 21.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 21.

providing military equipment, but rather relies primarily on training programs for military officers.⁸⁵

In the field of military training in Africa, as in military intervention, French activities are much more extensive than the British. The UK, however, as demonstrated by the intervention in Sierra Leone and other operations, possesses formidable capacities for military intervention in Africa as well as the political will to intervene. British capacities to intervene in conflicts that range from warfighting to peacekeeping are perhaps even greater than their French counterparts. In any case, as demonstrated by the foregoing two sections, France and the UK have a great deal of capabilities and the will to intervene in Africa on a unilateral basis to protect their wider national interests. Both countries have also made significant strides in streamlining command and other structures for strong expeditionary operations since the 1990s, and see power projection as essential components of national defense policy. We must now examine the ESDP, its capabilities-based strategy and its military operations in Africa in recent years, to compare its capacities for military action in Africa to that of its two most powerful member states.

The ESDP and Military Action in Africa: A Capabilities-Based Strategy

Since 1998, the member states of the EU have tried to build up the ESDP's military capacities, especially for expeditionary operations. The next section will briefly outline the development of the ESDP's capabilities-based strategy and its stated missions. The second section will examine the military intervention of the EU in the DRC in 2003 and 2006, the third section will look at training and aid programs, and the fourth section will compare the ESDP's capacities and effectiveness for military activity in Africa with that of France and the UK.

⁸⁵ Faria, 22, 26.

The Petersberg Tasks and the Headline Goals

Even though the first meeting at the Franco-British summit at St.-Malo was in December 1998, the real impetus for creating an effective EU military force was the 1999 military operation in Kosovo. The US took the lead in Kosovo, and the Europeans were marginalized in both the military and political decision-making processes, due the inability of the European states to field an effective autonomous force powerful enough to influence US policy.⁸⁶ The UK especially wanted to correct the imbalance in NATO that favored the US, and saw ESDP as a way for the UK and Europe to influence US strategy and policy in what was initially considered to be a force mainly for use in the European neighborhood.⁸⁷ France, in contrast, wanted the ESDP so as to reduce Europe's dependence on the US and NATO for military security.⁸⁸ The UK wants the ESDP to complement NATO and strengthen the Atlantic Alliance, while France wants European security autonomy.⁸⁹ This would seem an irreconcilable difference in objectives, but the construction of the ESDP has progressed since 1999 despite the fundamental disagreement on the purpose of the EU force.

Much of the academic and policy discussions about the ESDP centers on building European military capacities. Before exploring the specific nature of the capabilities-based approach and its goals and achievements, the purposes for which those military forces will be examined. At St.-Malo in 1998, France and the UK adopted the missions contained in the WEU's "Petersberg Declaration" of 1992 as the potential tasks for the new EU military forces.

The relevant section of the Petersberg Declaration, Title II, Paragraph 4, reads:

“Apart from contributing to the common defence in accordance with Article 5 of the Washington Treaty and Article V of the modified Brussels Treaty

⁸⁶ Nicole Gnesotto, “Introduction : bilans et perspectives de la PESD,” in Gnesotto, et al., 14-15.

⁸⁷ Jean-Yves Haine, “Brève histoire de la PESD,” in Gnesotto, et al., 46.

⁸⁸ Dumoulin, et al., 63.

⁸⁹ Jolyon Howorth, “Britain, France and the European Defence Initiative,” *Survival* 42:2 (Summer 2000), 36.

respectively, military units of the WEU Member States, acting under the authority of WEU, could be employed for:

- humanitarian and rescue tasks;
- peacekeeping tasks;
- tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking.”⁹⁰

Several aspects of these tasks are worth noting. First, the tasks are very broad, and open to interpretation, but at the same time, are at the low-intensity end of the force spectrum. The Petersberg Tasks do not explicitly exclude warfighting and high-intensity operations, but do not explicitly call for forces across the full spectrum of warfare. Second, the tasks resemble several of the missions in both French and British national defense strategies, as outlined in the sections above.⁹¹ Third, the Petersberg Declaration provides no concrete threat assessment (which in any case would have been out of date since it was drafted in 1992), which forced the ESDP, in adopting the tasks, to adopt a capabilities-based approach to its strategy and development, rather than a threat-based one.⁹²

In a threat-based strategy, a state will define the major threats to its interests, and design its military and force structure to defend against or deter those threats. In a capabilities-based strategy, threats are not defined, and thus the development of military forces is dependent on what states believe will be necessary to carry out certain hypothetical missions, such as those defined in the Petersberg Declaration. The US and most of Western Europe adopted capabilities-based strategies after the end of the Cold War.⁹³ A major problem of a capabilities-based strategy, however, is that countries often end up with inadequate forces or capabilities unsuited for the contingencies that do arise. In the ESDP, the former occurred, and

⁹⁰ Western European Union Council of Ministers, *Petersberg Declaration*, Bonn (June 19, 1992), 6. At: www.weu.int/documents/920619peter.pdf. Accessed: July 11, 2007.

⁹¹ See also David S. Yost, “The NATO Capabilities Gap and the European Union,” *Survival* 42:4 (Winter 2000-2001), 117.

⁹² It should be noted that in June 2002, Spain succeeded in getting the ESDP to incorporate the fight against terrorism into its missions. Ortega, 82-83.

⁹³ Colonel Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2006), 247-248.

the EU has inadequate forces for two reasons. First, as David Yost argues, a capabilities-based strategy based on broad scenarios that do not directly implicate individual state interests provides little incentive for states to increase defense spending to meet capability goals. In the EU, this is especially salient, as common defense is already provided for through NATO, and the ESDP is not vital for most countries' security interests.⁹⁴ Second, the states that do have powerful capabilities already, the UK and France, conserved their own more powerful forces for the better defined missions in their national defense policies, based on specific national interests.

Despite these problems, the ESDP capabilities goals were and remain ambitious. At the Helsinki Conference in December 1999, the member states developed the "Headline Goal," which called for an autonomous ESDP force of 50,000-60,000 troops, about fifteen brigades, for rapid reaction in crises.⁹⁵ The force was to be ready in 2003. The new EU military capacity was intended as a rapid reaction force, and the Headline Goal envisioned a number of other improvements in capacities to complement the new force, including new command and control structures and facilities, better satellite intelligence and reconnaissance, logistical support, mobility and rapid deployment.⁹⁶ The latter capacity, rapid deployment, necessitates a massive increase in strategic lift capacity, since the EU member states (including the UK and France) lack adequate air and sealift capacity. The dearth of airlift led the UK and France to develop a new joint transport aircraft, the A400M, scheduled to first be delivered in 2009, but the A400M

⁹⁴ Yost, 120.

⁹⁵ To field and support a force of that size, the EU would actually need about 100,000 men total. Burkard, Schmitt, "Les capacités : l'Union, combien de divisions?" in Gnesotto, et al., 98.

⁹⁶ Schmitt, 100.

still has only the same capacity as a US C-130 or a French C-160. Europe still lacks heavy lift aircraft, most notably an equivalent to the US C-17.⁹⁷

The EU created several organizations within the ESDP to facilitate the planning and conduct of operations. At the Cologne European Council Conference in March 2000, the Political and Security Committee (PSC), EU Military Committee (EUMC) and EU Military Staff (EUMS) were created.⁹⁸ The PSC defines policy for CFSP and ESDP, oversees all of the other planning groups, and is the ultimate authority in EU operations. It is directly responsible to the European Council and comprises the political directors from the member states foreign ministries. The EUMC lays out the strategic options for operations and crisis management and includes the chiefs of staff of the member states' militaries. It also drafts the operational directives based on the political objectives defined by the PSC and sends them to the EUMS. The EUMS, also composed of general officers from the member states, is in charge of strategic planning, and carries out many of the functional aspects of a military operation, including logistics and intelligence gathering.⁹⁹

The ESDP has two other functions for the conduct of military operations. The first is the "Framework Nation" concept, which is extremely important for EU operations in Africa. In order to make up for not having a centralized command, a Framework Nation is appointed (the country generally volunteers) for an EU operation, and the ESDP makes use of the command facilities provided by that country. Prior to 2006, the Framework Nation also incurred most of the financial costs of the operation.¹⁰⁰ The other institution is an independent EU planning

⁹⁷ Gustav Lindstrom, "Enter the EU Battlegroups" Chaillot Paper n^o97 (Paris: Institut d'études de sécurité, February 2007), 32-38. At: www.iss.europa.eu/chaillot/chai97/pdf. Accessed: July 17, 2007.

⁹⁸ Trevor C. Salmon and Alistair J.K. Shepherd, *Toward a European Army: A Military Power in the Making?* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003), 71.

⁹⁹ Dumoulin, et al., 332-344.

¹⁰⁰ Lindstrom, 25-26.

facility at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe (SHAPE), the central headquarters of NATO in Europe. The new European headquarters, created in November 2003, is independent of NATO, and has 130 officers on permanent staff from member states to coordinate EU operations.¹⁰¹

The EU did not achieve the 2003 Headline Goal to create the Rapid Reaction Force.¹⁰² In November 2003, the heads of state at a Franco-British summit meeting looked again at the Goal, and decided to create a new Headline Goal that postponed the deployment of the Rapid Reaction Force until 2010. The EU also started a new program in February 2004 to field new 1,500 men national and multinational battlegroups, the first of which came into being in early 2007.¹⁰³ The battlegroups are an interim force for intervention, and will eventually be a complement for the Rapid Reaction Force. As the battlegroup concept for EU operations was a direct result of the EU's 2003 operation in the DRC, the concept will be discussed further below.

The EU has made some significant progress in developing autonomous military capacities, but has a long way to go before its forces are suitable for anything beyond the lowest-intensity operations. Command, control and decision-making are also very complicated, hampering the ESDP's ability to field flexible and mobile forces and to respond rapidly to crises. The ESDP's two major operations in Africa, Operation Artemis and EUFOR RD Congo, even though limited, were totally dependent on member states national military

¹⁰¹ A.J.R. Groom, "Britain and Europe: looking through the defense prism," *Arès* 54 (January 2005), 28.

¹⁰² Some observers claim that the EU did in fact reach its target because by summer 2003 the member states had a total of 50,000-60,000 troops abroad in different national and international missions. See Bastian Griegerich and William Wallace, "Not Such a Soft Power: The External Deployment of European Forces," *Survival* 46:2 (Summer 2004), 164, for this argument. This is not the same as having the rapid reaction force envisioned at Helsinki, however, and the creation of the new 2010 Headline Goal in 2003 to push back the date for the force reflects the fact that the EU does not believe it achieved the goal.

¹⁰³ Lindstrom, 11.

assets and command structures, and reflect more the individual member state's capacities and will to intervene in Africa than a credible and autonomous EU military force for intervention.

ESDP in the Congo: Artemis and EUFOR RD Congo

On May 10, 2003, Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General called Jacques Chirac personally to ask for a French intervention in Ituri, a province in the northwest corner of the DRC.¹⁰⁴ After the international war in the DRC between 1998 and 2003 that killed perhaps four million people, Rwanda and Uganda pulled out of the Ituri region, and the local tribes, the Hemas and the Lundas, began to kill each other. A battalion of UN peacekeepers deployed in spring 2003 in Bunia, the capital of Ituri, a city of 150,000 people, but were unable to stop the fighting, and came under fire themselves.¹⁰⁵ It was in this context that Annan asked Chirac to intervene, and the French military began to prepare a national operation called "Operation Mamba."

On May 20, France sent nine reconnaissance troops to Bunia to assess the situation, and found that the UN troops could not leave the area around the airport, and that there were 17,000 refugees in the town. The French mission also evaluated the state of the airfield and the logistical necessities of an operation, and returned after 48 hours.¹⁰⁶ After the reconnaissance mission, Chirac agreed to deploy 800 French troops to Ituri to help the UN forces.¹⁰⁷ France likely would have intervened in the DRC even if it had not become an operation under the EU flag.

¹⁰⁴ Corine Lesnes and Stephen Smith, "RDC : à l'appel de l'ONU, l'armée française se prepare à stopper les massacres dans l'Ituri," *Le Monde* (May 22, 2003).

¹⁰⁵ Bruno Neveux, "Vers une Union opérationnelle? Artémis," *Défense nationale* 60 (May 2004), 14-15.

¹⁰⁶ Lesnes and Stephen.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas Hofnung, "La France est prête à intervenir," *Libération* (May 23, 2003).

Prior to the French reconnaissance mission, on May 19, 2003, France asked Javier Solana, the High Representative for the CFSP, to look into the feasibility of making the intervention an EU operation.¹⁰⁸ The first EU military operation had been launched several months earlier, Operation Concordia in Macedonia, so there was a precedent. France wanted it to be a multilateral operation because of its poor relations with Rwanda, which, due to Rwanda's influence in the region, hampered France's ability to launch a unilateral operation. France also was overstretched to a degree with 4,000 troops in Côte d'Ivoire and several thousand more in other overseas operations.¹⁰⁹ France first asked for British help, and then opened it up to the EU.

Operation Artemis was conceived as a "bridging operation," which puts troops on the ground for a limited amount of time, in order to have a follow-on force, in this case, more robust UN forces that were due to arrive in September.¹¹⁰ Such an operation requires both rapid deployment and strong forces with the ability to use deadly force, in order to create a stable security situation for the follow-on deployment of peacekeepers. Once the French intervention became an EU operation, the decision-making process became much more cumbersome than if it had been a unilateral French operation. The PSC, EUMC, and EUMS had to coordinate with all of the member states involved (there were on paper about 30 states signed on to aid in the operation, but the main contributors were France, the UK, Sweden and Belgium). Bruno Neveux, the French operational commander in Artemis, complained about the ESDP decision-making process, saying that it was too long and had too many steps, thus hampering the ability to rapidly deploy. The problem of decision-making was mitigated

¹⁰⁸ Neveux, 15.

¹⁰⁹ Sébastien Loisel, "Les leçons d'Artémis : vers une approche européenne de la gestion militaire des crises?" *Les Champs de Mars* 16 (2004), 74.

¹¹⁰ Lindstrom, 18-19.

somewhat by France's role as Framework Nation for Artemis, which ensured that France coordinated command and control and took care of most of the planning process.¹¹¹

Because Bunia did not have an adequate airport facility to receive the necessary transport, the operation was based in Entebbe, Uganda. France deployed the first of its troops on June 6, 2003; seven days after the UN Security Council authorized the intervention, under the Mamba operational directive.¹¹² On June 12, Operation Artemis got underway, and the first of 1200 troops began to deploy in Bunia.¹¹³ Eighty-five percent of the troops in Bunia were French, comprising most of the fighting force. The other large contingents were seventy Swedish soldiers and 100 British engineers. In Entebbe, 800 more troops provided support for the operation, and the French had a strategic reserve of about 1000 soldiers available in its other African bases, and also brought in air support based in the French base in N'Djamena, Chad.¹¹⁴

Operation Artemis lasted until September 1, 2003, when the EU force handed over the mission to the new UN troops arriving in Bunia. The operation is widely considered a success, because it improved the situation in Bunia, and restored some level of normal function to the city.¹¹⁵ French Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie praised Artemis, saying: "the European Union has proved its capacity and its will to act to reestablish stability in a country in crisis. France provided the command for the European force."¹¹⁶ Artemis was also an impressive feat of logistics that transported 2000 troops into the heart of Africa, though it at the same time demonstrated the shortcomings of the available strategic lift in Europe.¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ Neveux, 17, 20-21.

¹¹² Ibid, 15.

¹¹³ Ibid, 15.

¹¹⁴ Faria, 42-43.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 43.

¹¹⁶ "L'Union européenne a prouvé sa capacité et sa volonté d'agir par rétablir la stabilité dans un pays éprouvé. La France assurait le commandement de cette force européenne." Michèle Alliot-Marie, "Les leçons d'Artemis," *Le Figaro* (September 2, 2003).

¹¹⁷ Loisel, 77; Faria, 44.

A number of criticisms have been leveled at the operation, however. The EU troops, unlike the UN, were allowed to use deadly force, and did so on several occasions, but at the same time were constrained by UN rules of engagement. The EU only had adequate forces to secure Bunia, not the countryside around it, where many of the massacres were taking place, and in a major battle between rebel groups in Bunia on June 7, French and EU troops were forbidden to intervene by the UN and EU authorities.¹¹⁸

The most important criticism of Artemis, however, is that it was effectively a French operation, and not really an autonomous EU/ESDP intervention.¹¹⁹ In the words of Fernanda Faria, an analyst at the European Institute for Security Studies,

It is interesting to note that the number of non-French forces that were engaged in the headquarters was, in relative terms, much superior to the number of non-French troops engaged on the ground. In fact, none of the other contributing nations offered a substantial number of troops, nor is it certain that the French would have accepted it, as it would most likely have complicated coordination on the ground and might have weakened the robust position the French took...¹²⁰

When considering Artemis from this perspective, it appears that France embarked on a mission based in its national military strategy and African policy, and that it needed the ESDP mainly to deal with the political issue presented by Rwanda's presence in the region.

Thus, Artemis, while a success, needs to be seen in the light of French involvement in Africa, rather than as the beginning of a new era of EU autonomous action on the continent. As French Air Force Commander Antoine Sadoux wrote in 2005, ESDP action in Africa, and Artemis in particular, was merely a tool for France to advance its national policy. France wanted to limit the risks to its own forces, legitimize its operations so as to avoid further embarrassments and setbacks like Rwanda, and also use other EU forces (especially those of the UK) to augment

¹¹⁸ "Is protection a mirage," *Economist* (June 14, 2003); James F. Miskel and Richard J. Norton, "The Intervention in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," *Civil Wars* 6:4 (Winter 2003), 7.

¹¹⁹ Loisel, 85.

¹²⁰ Faria, 43.

its capacities for military intervention on the continent while many of its forces were tied down elsewhere.¹²¹ France's tight control of the operation indicates that it was a national intervention to the extent possible, and that the overall goal was likely in part to reestablish France as a strong power in central Africa after years of disengagement.¹²²

Artemis was not a good test of autonomous ESDP capacities for intervention in Africa, as it was almost exclusively run based on French capacities. It did illustrate clearly that without established French military assets, including bases on the continent for logistics and air support, experienced troops, and strategic lift, the operation could not have happened. It must be assumed that any future ESDP operations in Africa could not occur without French help first and foremost, and to a lesser degree, British military assistance. Artemis also exposed the unprepared state of most EU states for conducting power projection and operations abroad.

Artemis did lead ESDP and EU officials to adopt the concept of EU battlegroups of 1,500 men, a similar size to the force used in the DRC operation, to be available on a rotating base for rapid deployment in crisis situations. A battlegroup is a battalion-size force, "It is the smallest force that on its own can be deployed in the field over a period of time."¹²³ Thirteen battlegroups, pledged at the November 2004 Military Capability Commitment Conference, are scheduled to become available starting in 2007. Two battlegroups will be available for rapid deployment (ten days) with a rotation every six months. Most of the battlegroups, much to the surprise (and dismay) of France and the UK, are multinational units.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Antoine Sadoux, "La PESD : un moyen d'assurer la position de la France en Afrique?" *Défense nationale* 61:10 (October 2005), 68-70.

¹²² Bagayoko-Penone, "Les politiques européennes de prévention et de gestion des conflits," 101.

¹²³ ¹²³ Niklas Granholm, "EU-Battlegroups: Some New Capabilities, Actually," *RUSI Journal* 151:6 (December 2006), 63.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 63.

While the battlegroups are an interesting innovation, there are several potential problems with the new forces. The largest problem is that the small states in the EU will have a hard time providing troops with adequate projection capacities, especially in strategic lift. Niklas Granholm stated in 2006 that the Nordic Battlegroup (Sweden, Norway, Finland, Estonia, Ireland), has no strategic lift or training and experience in warfighting.¹²⁵ Thus, if the force was able to get enough lift capacity to deploy overseas, it could only participate in low-level peacekeeping operations, which seems to be the direction that the EU is heading for the use of the ESDP forces.

Another problem for the battlegroups is that the member states or groups of states create the battlegroups according to some general standards, but essentially on their own initiative. The heterogeneity of forces will potentially be a problem for interoperability, as smaller states will have to incur major costs and develop new technologies for their battlegroups to be interoperable with the better-armed and more advanced forces of France, the UK and Germany. There is no plan for joint battlegroup exercises, which might help alleviate some of the problems arising from this dilemma.¹²⁶ The interoperability problem again highlights the notion mentioned above that without concrete threat-based planning and strategy, states will be reluctant to increase their national defense budgets to meet multinational capacity needs. The EU battlegroups in the short to medium-term will probably only be useful mainly for low-intensity peacekeeping tasks.¹²⁷

While the battlegroup system has yet to be tested in a major EU operation, the EU again intervened in the DRC in 2006, in an operation called EUFOR RD Congo, intended to oversee the elections in Kinshasa. The UN asked for the EU operation so as to increase UN capacities to

¹²⁵ Granholm, 64.

¹²⁶ Lindstrom, 24-28.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 17.

respond to problems during the elections, as there was the possibility of serious violence.¹²⁸

There were problems in getting consensus and support for the operation among EU states from the outset, much more so than during the run-up to Artemis.

France refused to be the Framework Nation, as it had paid most of the financial costs for Artemis, and did not want to repeat that experience.¹²⁹ France and the UK also complained of overstretch due to other operations commitments. The UK refused to send any of its forces to participate in the operation. Germany reluctantly agreed to be Framework Nation, and ran the operation out of Potsdam. Germany and France, despite France's initial reluctance to participate, provided most of the troops for the operation.¹³⁰ Germany asked for 400-500 troops from other member states, but did not receive them. Germany also insisted that the operation be of limited duration (four months), and be in accordance with a specific UN Resolution and a request from DRC President Joseph Kabila's government.¹³¹ Planning for the operation and the decision-making process was also very slow.¹³²

Eventually, 1,247 troops were deployed, using France's Gabon base as a reserve of 1,172 men, as well as the main base of operations. The UN deployed in the east of the DRC and the EU troops deployed in the capital and in the south.¹³³ The operation was officially considered a success, since little violence occurred during the election process up to the end of the ESDP intervention on November 30, 2006.¹³⁴ The favorable assessment by the WEU overlooked, however, the fact that the Germans insisted that the EU force pull out on that date, which was the

¹²⁸ Idriss Al Rifāi and Joanna Scott, "Premier bilan de l'opération Eufor RDC," *Défense nationale* 63:1 (January 2007), 49-50.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 51-52.

¹³⁰ Simon Taylor and Andrew Beatty, "Congo (Dem. Rep.) Politics: Germany demands more troops for Congo." *EIU ViewsWire* (March 9, 2006).

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Al Rifāi, 53.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

¹³⁴ Assembly of Western European Union, "ESDP – The Way Ahead," 9.

date after the announcement of the results of the elections, when the potential for violence was greatest. The actual violence after that point was limited, but it was not due to the EU presence, which pulled out before ensuring security on the ground after the elections.¹³⁵

EUFOR RD Congo, coming three years after Artemis, did not demonstrate any major advances in EU military capacities for active engagement in Africa. Germany and France effectively took the entire burden of the operation, and the other member states were content to hold back their own national forces. The experience indicates a lack of consensus on ESDP operations and interests abroad. EUFOR RD Congo fits well into the categories of operations in the Petersberg Declaration, but it appears that most member states are not sufficiently convinced of the necessity of crisis management in Africa by the EU to contribute military forces. Both Artemis and EUFOR RD Congo were very limited operations as well, and do not reflect the level of engagement that France faced in Côte d'Ivoire or that the UK faced in Sierra Leone. The EU has effectively limited its "autonomous military capacity" to that of very low-intensity operations and peacekeeping. After a brief description of EU military cooperation programs in Africa, a comparison of French, British and EU military policies in Africa will highlight the relative deficiencies of ESDP in Africa.

EU Military Cooperation in Africa

ESDP military training and cooperation with Africa differs from that of France and the UK in two major areas. The first is that while France and the UK base their programs primarily on bilateral programs based on treaties and agreements with specific African states, the EU prefers to deal with international organizations to augment African capacities. The main organization that the EU chooses to work with is the AU, which it sees as the most important

¹³⁵ Al Rifai, 52-54.

organization for security in Africa.¹³⁶ The EU firmly believes that the responsibility lies with Africa to ensure its internal security, and that the available international organizations are the best route to achieve that security.¹³⁷ For this reason, the EU also officially supports the AU's pan-African agenda.¹³⁸

The second way in which EU military cooperation differs with national military policies is that it focuses on helping African countries to improve their civilian means to maintain order within their own countries. EU aid includes police assistance and training, as well as security sector reform. As of 2007, the EU had a police mission running in Kinshasa in the DRC alongside a security sector reform operation. The EU also has police and security sector administration teams in the Balkans, Moldova, and Iraq.¹³⁹

Finally, the EU contributed military and police observers and advisors to the AU Mission in Darfur, AMIS, along with about \$1 billion in funds, which included aid for refugees in the camps in Chad.¹⁴⁰ The EU also provided airlift for 2000 AU troops in the Darfur operation.¹⁴¹ The AU has largely failed to achieve a stable security situation in Darfur, and has not ameliorated the humanitarian crisis, but the EU and its member states have made no move to send in significant military force as in the DRC, or to task a battlegroup to intervene in the crisis. A potential EU operation in Darfur would be of much higher-intensity warfare than encountered in either Artemis or EUFOR RD Congo, and thus the EU has limited its response since it is not prepared to undertake that type of operation.

¹³⁶ Faria, 34.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 34.

¹³⁸ WEU Assembly, "Recommendation 768 on peacekeeping in sub-Saharan Africa: a practical approach," (2005). At: www.assembly-weu.org/en/documents/sessions_ordinaires/txt/2005/768rec.pdf. Accessed: July 17, 2007.

¹³⁹ Assembly of Western European Union, "ESDP: The Way Ahead," 20-21.

¹⁴⁰ European Union Factsheet, "European Union Response to the Darfur Crisis," (July 17, 2006). At: ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/michel/speeches/docs/060714darfur_en.pdf. Accessed: July 11, 2007.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

Comparing Capacities: The EU, France and the UK

The EU, while having managed to intervene on a very low level in the Congo twice in recent years, still does not have the capacities to intervene in Africa except in the lowest intensity operations, such as very limited peace operations. The ESDP's ability to act is hampered by the lack of consensus among EU member states on the need for military intervention in Africa, as illustrated clearly by the lack of support and consensus for EUFOR RD Congo in 2006, which stemmed from disagreement over the EU's general interests abroad and a lack of political will. Aside from the most powerful and rich states in the EU, most countries are also reluctant to raise their defense budgets to increase the effectiveness and interoperability of their forces for interventions abroad, despite the pledges from many states to create battlegroups.

What has emerged is an ESDP that is useful primarily for low-level peacekeeping operations, bridging operations to facilitate UN intervention, and civilian crisis management. While this force is useful, it appears that in the short to medium-term, the EU will only be able to intervene to influence events in low-level crises in Africa that require only small military forces for a relatively short duration. In a sense, the EU has become a complement to UN peacekeeping forces, rather than an international military actor in its own right. In high-intensity crises such as in Darfur or in Somalia, the EU was not capable of intervening to improve the humanitarian and security situations.

On the other hand, as we have seen, the UK and France possess significant military capacities to effectively intervene in Africa. Without French assets in Africa and command and control capacities in metropolitan France, the EU could not have launched the Artemis or EUFOR RD Congo operations. Any EU action in Africa in the foreseeable future will be contingent on French agreement and support from its national assets. The UK will play a

significant future role in EU as well, as its military has the only capacity in Europe to intervene unilaterally in force in Africa aside from France.

Conclusion

The EU operations in the Congo in 2003 and 2006 do not herald a new era or a new type of European multinational interventions on the African continent. While both operations had some successes, the actions demonstrated that the ESDP's capacities are somewhat less than the sum of its parts. Operation Artemis reflected a partial commitment of almost totally French capacities for intervention, and while it had some success, it reflected the fact that France was committed heavily elsewhere, most notably in Côte d'Ivoire, and could not bring all of its available forces to bear to achieve real results on the ground. The contributions of other member states were negligible. In EUFOR RD Congo, the operation was effectively hampered by France's refusal to take charge, and the refusal of most other European states to take part in the intervention. Without France and/or the UK, the EU cannot intervene in Africa, or likely anywhere else in the world.

In the short to medium-term, France and the UK will likely continue to launch unilateral operations (or multilateral in coalitions with local African allied states and regional organizations as in Côte d'Ivoire) in Africa. French and British capacities are sufficient to carry out operations on the continent across the spectrum from peacekeeping to warfighting, and to sustain multiple operations on the continent at once. It is true that the UK has been absent (excepting Artemis) from African intervention since 2000, but as British forces pull out of Iraq and elsewhere, more troops will become available for operations in Africa. The same is true for France, as the Côte d'Ivoire operation winds down in 2007. Both countries have the capacities and interests for

military intervention on the continent, and the role of Africa in their respective defense policies indicates that the two states will continue to be active on their own in Africa outside of the ESDP.

While the ESDP's capacities for intervention in Africa are significantly less than that of France and the UK, it is possible that the EU could improve those capacities to take on a wider range of military crises in the future. The EU must make a decision about its military role on the continent, however. The ESDP is currently becoming a method for low-level peacekeeping in the model of the UN, and emphasizes its focus on civilian crisis management. The EU must decide whether it will continue to prepare for primarily low-level operations to support the UN, and to effectively leave more difficult operations to the British and French, or whether it will augment its capacities to deal with a greater range of crises. The latter will necessitate more political will and consensus on the EU's military role in Africa, the commitment of French and British forces for projection in much greater measure to the ESDP, and increased defense spending and troop commitments by other member states. This will be very difficult to achieve, and could only be done in the long-term, but until the EU moves to create real effective forces for military action in Africa, the member states of France and the UK will continue to be the major military arbiters on the continent. The EU is not a major autonomous military power yet, and it is unclear whether the ESDP and its record in Africa indicate adequate improvements in common European capacities to be that independent power.