

SUMMARY

from Secretariat

to Working Group VIII on Defence

Subject : Summary of the meeting held on 14 October 2002

Outcome of Proceedings

1. Auditions of General Cabigiosu (Former commander KFOR), General Hägglund (Chairman of EU Military Committee), Mr Leroy (EU Special Representative in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

The Working Group took note of a series of presentations by the above invited guests on the issue of crisis management.

General Cabigiosu underlined the importance of a number of elements which had a key role to play in ensuring an effective military chain of command in a multinational force structure. These included the procedures for appointing the force commander, military discipline (including how to operate within a variety of different legal structures), shared training (thought needed to be given to establishing a common European staff college), and commonalities in areas such as salaries, insurance and social provisions. A successful multinational operation depended on a good combination of fighting units operating together on the ground. Common capabilities were needed in the areas of logistics, strategic lift and intelligence (although this was recognised as being a sensitive area).

General Hägglund, who stressed that he was intervening on a personal basis, set out for the working group the current structures and procedures operating in the area of crisis management. In reality any operation would be decided by all Member States, but might be conducted only by some (i.e. a "coalition of the willing"). The current procedures involved a number of committees, which was not necessarily conducive to quick decision-making, although the provision in the Nice Treaty to allow for delegation of decisions to the PSC was helpful. The role of the Military Staff was to provide advice on strategic military options; its terms of reference did not currently include operational planning and running of operations. Extending its mandate to include this could perhaps be an issue for the

Convention to look at. Other possible issues for discussion might include the following: how to unify authority for crisis management, possibly in the person of the High Representative; whether crisis management would benefit from the HR chairing the Foreign Affairs Council; how to link in military command with EU Special Representatives on the ground (with lessons to be drawn from the experience of the UN) and whether to expand the EU's capacity to operate militarily within the EU (i.e. in the area of civil protection).

Mr Leroy outlined the current situation concerning EU Special Representatives. Drawing on his own experience, he set out a number of positive factors which had resulted in a broadly successful experience of crisis management in FYROM. Firstly, nomination of Special Representatives by the Council was an important way of conferring political legitimacy. Secondly, working links between the Special Representatives and the High Representative functioned well (with the HR able to intervene rapidly and effectively when required). Thirdly, success on the ground was due more to influence rather than overt political authority. Fourthly, cooperation between the EU and US had been excellent, and good relations had been built up with OSCE, NATO, and with the Russians. Particular aspects which needed to be improved were finance (resources were insufficient) and logistics (e.g. there were no secure communications with Brussels). The links between different institutions functioned reasonably well, although there were few contacts with the EP.

2. Exchange of views on crisis management

The Chairman invited members of the group to respond to the issues raised during the expert presentations, focussing specifically on the questions set out in the agenda of the meeting.

There was broad agreement in the Group on the need to ensure swift decision-making in the area of crisis management, and that there were currently too many procedures involved. The input into the process from different committees needed to be simplified, although the existing structures could only be changed with difficulty since they were a reflection of the current pillar arrangements. Several members of the group proposed that crisis management could be made more effective by giving more direct authority to the High Representative. The idea of creating the post of a Deputy HR responsible for Defence was also suggested, although caution was also expressed about creating further posts. There was general support for the role of Special Representatives, with some suggesting that they should have greater independence in the field. There was also support for the provision of adequate financial support for crisis management, including for Special Representatives. The issue of the political accountability of Special Representatives needed to be addressed, as well as the more general issue of accountability for crisis management operations. The idea of extending the mandate of the Military Staff to enable it to plan and conduct specific operations was noted. There was support for the suggestion of extending cooperation in areas such as training and legal harmonisation.

A few points were made by the guest speakers by way of follow-up. It was noted that there were arguments in support of providing a single contact point in the field responsible for overall of EU action, thereby ensuring coherence. The role of the HR could be extended to chairing the Foreign Affairs Council (which would assist in particular during a crisis), albeit with the PSC retaining its role of providing strategic direction of any crisis management operation.

The Chairman concluded the meeting by noting the following:

- There was general agreement on the need for rapid and streamlined procedures for crisis management without compromising political accountability.
- The group had noted that the existing mandate for the Military Staff did not enable it to plan or conduct operations, but that the civilian aspects of operations are planned and conducted within the EU structures.
- The members of the group agreed on the need to enhance cooperation on training. There had been some interest in the suggestion to establish a joint military staff college.
- There was broad support for enhancing the role of the High Representative, including providing for the right of initiative in the area of crisis management, but at the same time retaining the central role of the PSC for the political control and strategic direction of crisis management operations. The suggestion of creating a Deputy HR with responsibility for defence had also been put forward.
- The issue of the status, role and resources available to Special Representatives also need to be looked at further. Both this issue, as well as that of the role of the High Representative, would be best pursued at the joint meeting of the External Action and Defence Working groups.

The next meeting would take place on 29 October, and would focus on the issue of the scope of ESDP. A paper would be circulated to the Working Group in advance of the meeting.
