EU Centre in Singapore

Working Paper No. 10, September 2012

Why EU promotion is at odds with successful crisis management: Public relations, news coverage, and the Aceh Monitoring Mission

Stephanie Anderson

Photo © Aceh Monitoring Mission

ABSTRACT

The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and its accompanying Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions can be tools used to increase the international profile of the European Union. Nevertheless, CSDP missions garner little news coverage. This article argues that the very nature of the missions themselves makes them poor vehicles for EU promotion for political, institutional, and logistical reasons. By definition, they are conducted in the middle of crises, making news coverage politically sensitive. The very act of reporting could undermine the mission. Institutionally, all CSDP missions are intergovernmental, making press statements slow, overly bureaucratic, and of little interest to journalists. Logistically, the missions are often located in remote, undeveloped parts of the world, making it difficult and expensive for European and international journalists to cover. Moreover, these regions in crisis seldom have a thriving, local free press. Using the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) as a case study, the author concludes that although a mission may do good, CSDP missions cannot fulfil the political function of raising the profile of the EU.

The EU Centre in Singapore is a partnership of

NUS National University of Singapore

NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

Why EU promotion is at odds with successful crisis management: Public relations, news coverage, and the Aceh Monitoring Mission

STEPHANIE ANDERSON [1]

Introduction

One of the stated objectives behind the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions is to increase the international profile of the European Union (EU). However, the very nature of the missions themselves makes them poor vehicles for EU promotion. Even when they are successful, their attributes make EU publicity extremely difficult. First, politically, they are almost always the result of closed-door negotiations, and therefore do not lend themselves to publicity. Institutionally, they are always *de facto* coalitions of the willing, with few public relations resources and many masters. As a result, press statements are the product of lowest common denominator agreements by the 27 member states, and of little interest to journalists. Logistically, CSDP missions are usually located in remote, undeveloped parts of the world, often without a thriving, local free press, making it difficult and expensive for European and international journalists to cover. Using the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) as a case study, the author concludes that although a mission may do good, CSDP missions cannot fulfil the political function of raising the profile of the EU.

The first section of the paper explains the political premise of using CSDP missions and the Aceh mission in particular to showcase the EU. Using data from a quantitative content analysis, the author demonstrates that this policy disappoints; in general, CSDP missions are not newsworthy and do not succeed in raising the Union's profile. Aceh, although undeniably successful, had minimal press coverage. The paper then uses a qualitative analysis to explain how the very nature of CSDP missions undermines their use as a political promotion tool.

Visibility and the CSDP: Increasing the EU's International Prestige and Support among its Citizens[2]

The EU's foreign and security policy is supposed to increase its profile both at home and abroad. The Maastricht Treaty on European Union (1993) stated that one of the main goals of the newly established Common Foreign and Security Policy was to "assert its identity on the international scene." This goal was reiterated in the Saint-Mâlo Declaration in December 1998, which led to the formation of the subsequent European Security and Defence Policy[3] "in order that Europe c[ould] make its voice heard in world affairs." According to the 2003 Concept for EU Monitoring Missions, one of the "basic principles" was to "enhance EU visibility". In 2010, the European External Action Service (EEAS) was established with the same goal in mind: to "increase the Union's political and economic influence in the world." [4] Commission spokeswoman Pia Arkenhilde explained, "It's obvious that visibility is part of being effective. It's important for the recipients of the aid to know who they are dealing with and for the European tax payer, the donors of the aid, to see the actions on the ground, in terms of their future engagement." [5]

CSDP missions provide public relations opportunities to promote the European Union to its citizens. The missions have press officers and use both traditional and creative ways to increase their visibility. The EU Council Secretariat prints colour brochures to promote missions, such as Proxima, the EU Police Mission in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. [6] Some missions, for example, EULEX Kosovo and the Aceh Monitoring Missions even created special logos for their operations:

[1] Stephanie Anderson was a Visiting Fellow at the EU Centre in Singapore, and is currently Associate Professor at the University of Wyoming. The views expressed in this working paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the EU Centre in Singapore.

[2] For a more in-depth analysis of CSDP role in identity or nation building in the EU, see Stephanie Anderson, *Crafting EU Security Policy: In Pursuit of European Identity* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner 2008).

[3] The Lisbon Treaty later changed the name of the policy to the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

[4] 25 March 2010 Council Draft 8029/10.

[5] Andrew Rettman, "EU commission justifies Haiti 'visibility' concerns" *euboserver.org*, 28 January 2010.

[6] http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/ProximaBrochure.pdf.

Others have created Facebook pages or made documentaries for television.[7] In Kosovo, the EULEX mission, the EU special representative and the Commission all collaborated on a public relations road-show called "Come to Europe" that travelled by truck to twenty towns in the region featuring a specially written play, quizzes, music and local entertainment.[8]

Unfortunately, such efforts have had limited success in garnering press attention. For example, the GoogleNews archives which combs over 25,000 sources finds only two articles on the Kosovo road-show.[9] A quantitative study of news coverage of CSDP missions shows that, in general, they get very little press play. Why? Considering that visibility is one of the basic principles behind CSDP missions and that the EU devotes many resources to it, the lack of news coverage could be interpreted as a policy failure. Understanding the reasons behind this failure, whether it is a question of agency, that is whether the EU would be able to fix the problem by changing procedure, or whether it is structural, that is, intrinsic in the missions themselves, is vital to addressing the EU's foreign policy goals. This paper concludes that the problem is structural: CSDP missions are poor vehicles for EU promotion because of political, institutional, and logistical reasons. If these missions inherently cannot fulfil their visibility function, the EU may want to rethink whether such risky ventures are still worthwhile.

The EU in Aceh: Primed for Success? A Case-Study into the Public Relations Side of CSDP Missions

The Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) is an excellent case through which to analyse the public relations side of CSDP missions because it was such a success. The mission accomplished its goals with no deaths, few embarrassments, and within the established time limits and budgets. Moreover, Aceh marked the EU's first foray into Asia, having been invited after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. The promise of both peace and European aid brought in a significant human dimension as well as a ready-made press corps that was already on the ground reporting on the devastation. In addition, the decommissioning of arms was 'sexy', as the subject provided good photo ops for journalists.

The 2004 tsunami provided the impetus for all conflicting parties to work towards a peace agreement, whose negotiations were already underway between the Free Aceh Movement or Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM) and the government of Indonesia (GoI). The EU became involved because many GAM rebels, who were in exile in Finland and Sweden, became EU citizens. A Finnish businessman with decades of experience in Indonesia, Juha Christensen, became an intermediary between all the relevant parties. He contacted former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari, to inquire whether his group, the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), might be interested in facilitating the peace process. Ahtisaari, in turn, contacted EU High Representative for CFSP, Javier Solana.[10] According to a US State Department cable released by Wikileaks, "The GoI suggested that ASEAN as an organization perform this task [the monitoring of the peace mission]. Ahtisaari felt ASEAN 'would not be credible enough' for the GAM, but suggested that ASEAN and the EU together might suffice. He left this thought (which he has already mentioned to Solana) for both sides to consider." [11] Although the Indonesian government preferred ASEAN, the GAM wanted to internationalize the presence as much as possible, and the GoI preferred the EU to the United Nations (UN) because of its negative experience with the UN in East Timor.[12] Moreover, ASEAN did not have the capabilities to take on such as task alone.

[7] Interview with press officer at CSDP mission who wished to remain anonymous on 27 February 2012.
[8] http://www.flickr.com/photos/eulex/2507978739/
[9] "Warten auf Instruktionen in Kosovo" *Neue Zuericher Zeitung*, 16 June 2008, http://www.nzz.ch/aktuell/startseite/warten-auf-instruktionen-in-kosovo-1.760317
[10] Kirsten E. Schulze, "Mission Not So Impossible: The AMM and the Transition from Conflict to Peace in Aceh, 2005-2006," *Working Paper no. 131*, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore and interview with participant who wished to remain anonymous, 14 May 2012, Singapore.
[11] Wikileaks US State Department Cables, 05 Helsinki 242, 2005-02-25, 13:22, Confidential: Embassy Helsinki.
[12] Interview with Dutch official from the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the European Union, 8 November 2005, Brussels, Belgium.

The EU and ASEAN monitors worked in teams composed of people from each organization to monitor and rule on any violations of the MoU, maintain good cooperation among the parties, oversee the decommissioning of GAM weapons, as well as to monitor human rights and the process of legislative change in Aceh.

Kirsten Schulze labelled the mission successful because of GAM's and GoI's commitment to the peace process, the impartiality of the mission, the support of EU member states during setup, as well as the quick amnesty and the establishment of the Commission on Security Arrangements (COSA). [13] Regarding the monitors themselves, the officials were well trained, highly skilled and some had experience of other processes of disarmament.[14] The Head of Mission had excellent diplomatic and managerial skills as well as expertise and experience. Nearly all of the 2000 prisoners were granted amnesty and quickly released. The decommissioning of GAM weapons, redeployment of Indonesian military personal, and the reintegration of former GAM members into society, for the most part, went smoothly.[15]

One problem did come up with former GAM members not getting the money that was promised to them. Local GAM commanders said that they needed more money because there were more ex-combatants then they thought, but there were also hints of luxury cars and new houses.[16] Another disappointment was in the area of human rights. At the end of the mission, neither a human rights court nor a truth and reconciliation commission had been established. However, as Schulze has argued, if the AMM had pushed human rights too hard in the beginning, the progress the mission did make might not have happened.[17] In other words, the political sensitivity limited the mission to this degree. The political sensitivity also limited the public relations side of the mission as well.

The AMM as Public Relations Tool

After the French and the Dutch rejected the Constitutional Treaty in May and June of 2005, the EU desperately needed damage control and some positive PR. In the wake of the referendum defeat, Solana promised to make the ESDP the crowning achievement of the EU:

> What is of crucial importance now is that we keep on working as we did before and that we do not get into a psychological paralysis. Let me assure you that this will undoubtedly not happen to me!
>
> . . . . There is no doubt that the European people as well as the European leaders wish the EU to become an increasingly important actor in the international arena.
>
> In the meantime, our work has to continue and we need to explain to our partners around the world that the EU will remain an active global player. Our partners need a strong Europe that acts with determination on the international stage. Life continues and the course of the world will not stop. The world's challenges will not change because of yesterday's vote and there are many problems of the world that keep on challenging us. We as the EU have to face these problems and we have to keep on working on their resolution 24 hours a day. This is what we will have to do and this is what I will certainly do.[18]

Solana understood that successful ESDP missions could rally the public once more, and renew faith in the Union. Ahtisaari concurred: "I felt that this [Aceh] was a splendid opportunity for the EU to show it can succeed in such things. That, in spite of other troubles, there could be co-operation on foreign and security issues in the EU." [19] The French were strong supporters of the idea, finding that the Aceh "operation also sat extremely well with the whole EU

[13] Kirsten E. Schulze, "Mission Not So Impossible the Aceh monitoring and Mission and Lessons learned for the EU," *International Policy Analysis,* http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id/04786.pdf pg. 1.

[14] Kirsten E. Schulze, "Aceh – AMM" in European Union Institute for Security Studies, *European Security and Defence Policy: The First 10 years (1999-2009),* 267.

[15] Ibid., 269-271.

[16] Ibid., 271.

[17] Ibid., 272.

[18] Summary of the remarks to the press by EU's High Representative for the CFSP, Javier Solana on the results of the referendum in France, Brussels, 30 May 2005, S201/05, http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/declarations/84999.pdf

[19] Katri Merikallio, *Making Peace: Ahtisaari and Aceh*, (Juva: WS Bookwell Oy (WSOY), 2006): 80. See also Quentin Peel, "The importance to Europe of a distant war" *Financial Times*, 18 August 2005, 21.

security strategy, in which the EU sought a more weighty role worldwide."[20]

The Media Coverage of CSDP Missions: Little Mention and Little Debate

If external action is to "bring Europe closer to the people", at the minimum, the people must know that the EU acts overseas. Luxembourg, which held the EU presidency during the first half of 2005, made the issue of ESDP promotion a main talking point. Although lengthy, this quotation is instructive.

> To achieve the goal of an improved and enhanced communication strategy, there is no secret: explain, popularize, envelop it in common language at the same time as debating its objectives and concepts in order to spread it among the public. In most of the European societies, where armed conflicts have a bad reputation and where the horrors of war are still profoundly anchored, speaking about security and defence often awakens suspicion and provokes a sense of unease which it is difficult to get rid of. Nonetheless, stereotypes and misleading sentiments tend to stay on forever. *Therefore, in order to convince, the European Union and the Member States have to become even more active and have to develop a true communication strategy on ESDP. The objective of this strategy should be to rally public opinion around a policy and to legitimate the ESDP by a strong parliamentary and popular support.* [sic, but emphasis added].[21]

Academic research supports the claims made above: media coverage, provided it is both visible and consistent, can change public opinion regarding the EU.[22]

In general, all the CSDP missions have been successful insofar as they have accomplished their goals, had minimal loss of life, and cost relatively little. Certainly, there have been some mildly embarrassing stories, for example, when Iraqis participating in EULEX Iraq, brought to the Netherlands for judicial training, snuck out to seek asylum in Sweden,[23] but not only have there been no Srebrenicas,[24] there are almost no cases of misbehaving military or civilian workers. As Luc Frieden, Luxembourg minister and President-in-office of the Council explained, "European soldiers in the world are like our visiting card." [25] Therefore, the Council adopted standards of behaviour to be applied to all categories of personnel involved in ESDP operations. Any violation of human rights is to be reported, and all are to respect the ethnic, religious and cultural diversity of the local population. Drug use and sexual exploitation are forbidden: "It is a code of conduct so that EU soldiers are worthy representatives of the EU in difficult missions throughout the world."[26] This record is a significant accomplishment.

Yet, the media have mostly ignored the CSDP missions. In a content analysis, the author and her research assistant placed the official names of every CSDP mission into three separate databases: Lexis/Nexis Academic (Lexis); World News Connection (WNC), formerly the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS); and the GoogleNews archive. Lexis/Nexis has a database of over 10,000 global news sources.[27] WNC, operated by the Open Source Center, an agency of the US government, has thousands of non-US media translated into English, with a particular emphasis on local media coverage.[28] GoogleNews covers about 25,000 news sources worldwide.[29]

[20] Ibid., 84.

[21] Luxembourg Presidency, "Working document relating to point 5 of the agenda: Presidency non-paper - Promoting the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)" 11 March 2005, http://www.eu2005.lu/en/actualites/documents_travail/2005/03/18definfo/index.html

[22] Claes DeVreese and Hajo G. Boomgaarden, "Media Effects on Public Opinion about the Enlargement of the European Union," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 44 (2006),419.

[23] Interview with Dutch official from the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the European Union, 8 November 2005, Brussels, Belgium.

[24] The July 1995 Srebrenica massacre or genocide during the Bosnian war refers to the killing of 8,000 Bosniaks or Bosnian Muslims in an enclave designated a "safe area" under UN protection. The 400 Dutch peacekeepers on the ground were unable to prevent the massacre.

[25] "UE/Defence: Progress expected in military capabilities field," *Europe*, 24 May 2005, 4.

[26] Ibid.

[27] http://www.lexisnexis.com/en-us/products/lexisnexis-academic.page

[28] For more information, see http://wnc.fedworld.gov/description.html .

[29] Joshua Cohen, "Same Protocol, More Options for News Publishers". Google News Blog. December 2, 2009, "There

Due to language barriers, this research project only utilized articles in English or translated into English. Both Lexis and WNC databases have extensive archives of English-language articles, translated and otherwise. Despite this limitation, the search yielded thousands of newspaper articles, press releases, broadcast transcripts, and various opinion pieces from news sources around the world. In order to ensure the analysis of only relevant articles, all missions search terms included only the official mission name (e.g. EULEX Kosovo, EUFOR Congo) and date restrictions when necessary (e.g. the multiple EUPOL missions in Congo). We looked for the specific terms throughout the article, as opposed to searching within the headline and lead, in order to count as many relevant results as possible. The content analysis necessarily excluded press selections, governmental journals and reports, and industry reports due to time constraints and relevance to search terms and parameters.

Such a large volume of articles necessitated the use of random sampling for the various missions. The analytical criteria for missions with a high volume (over 150) of articles called for a sampling of 100 articles, regardless of the sample size. The criteria also stressed the need to randomly select articles based on a logical, linear basis. For example, the EUFOR Althea mission in the WNC search yielded 266 hits, so every second article comprised the random sample for the content analysis (articles 2, 4, 6, etc.). Missions with fewer than 150 hits necessitated a content analysis of all available articles so as to ensure the best possible outcome for statistical analysis. Since there is no feasible way to exclude the irrelevant types of publications within the search parameters in the respective search engines, whenever press selections or other similarly excluded types of articles appeared in the results, the next possible relevant article was analyzed and the pattern of randomly selecting articles resumed at the predetermined intervals.

Slight differences in the two search engines necessitated slightly different search methods on occasion. For example, the WNC database only goes back ten years, thus explaining the lack of articles for the ECMM/EUMM, the Balkans monitoring mission. Furthermore, Lexis allowed for sorting of the articles by date, starting with the earliest available date. WNC sorted articles by date but only allowed for sorting starting with the latest date. While not ideal, the content analysis of the WNC articles for each mission began with the most recent articles and progressed to the earliest. Analysis from Lexis sources began with the earliest possible articles and progressed from there. With regard to Lexis/Nexis, we did not specify a region so as to cast the net as wide as possible. We chose to search for the words as natural language.

Coding for each article consisted of eleven different variables: date, official mission name, perspective, coverage tone, country of origin for the publication, length of the article (number of sentences), length of the actual coverage on the mission (number of sentences), word count, search engine utilized, article type (news, analysis, opinion, or press release), and publication. WNC searches included inflated word counts due to the presence of reprinted leads, and expansive tags and search terms. In order to remain consistent, all numbers for the word count variable are reproduced as given by the respective search engines. Identifying information present in each article allowed for straightforward coding for other variables (date, country of origin, length of articles, length on action, search engine, and publications). The researcher manually counted the sentences for the length of the article and length on the action.

The variables of coverage tone, article type, and perspective required strict coding criteria due to the subjective nature of the variables. Coverage tone of the articles consisted of either positive or negative coding. Positive articles reported on the progress of the respective missions, analysed the process and outcomes of the missions, or characterized the missions in any sort of positive or neutral way. Negative articles focused almost entirely on mission setbacks. Mission deaths, local population casualties due to the mission presence, serious administrative obstacles (on the EU, international, and national levels), and/or tactical and strategic obstacles were the indicators for negative coverage tone. The strict criteria for coding articles as negative were necessary in order to properly classify articles in the instance where the majority of the coverage remained positive or neutral.

Article type consisted of four categories: news, analysis, opinion, and press releases. In most cases, the identifying information in the article identified the proper article type. When the publisher or search engine failed to provide the information within the article, a thorough reading of the articles coupled with

are more than 25,000 publishers from around the world in Google News today."

comparison to previously categorized articles provided sufficient information to determine the correct article type.

Perspective of the article proved to be the most difficult to code. Perspective consisted of three different categories: national, international, or European. Due to perspective overlap, in particular between the European and international perspectives, the analytical criteria needed to be thorough. For an article to be considered European in perspective, the majority of the article had to report on the significance of the mission with regard to the EU, issues regarding European coordination and decision-making, or states' role both with and within the EU or Europe as a whole. For an article to be considered international in perspective, the article needed to cover the larger geopolitical ramifications of the respective missions (namely with regard to the UN, NATO, or other international organizations; also, the larger realms of international or regional security), or relations of the country in which the mission was taking place with the number of applicable international institutions or states. For an article to be considered national in perspective, it needed primarily to cover individual states' experiences with the missions, namely in the form of budgetary and operational concerns and progress. Undoubtedly, some articles could be classified as international or European, or national or European, but the criteria served to eliminate as much ambiguity as possible.

MISSION	LEXIS NEXIS	WORLD NEWS CONNECTION	GOOGLE NEWS
EUTM Somalia	72	18	142
EUNAVFOR Somalia (Atalanta)	336	482	1720
EUNAVCO Somalia	4	0	8
EUMM Georgia	518	106	577
EULEX Kosovo	3000+	2728	8790
EU SSR Guinea-Bissau	16	11	12
EUFOR TCHAD Chad	1494	367	1220
EUPOL Afghanistan	400	69	1060
EUPOL Congo	104	8	210
EUFOR RD Congo	522	103	1130
EUPT Kosovo	27	9	40
EUPAT Macedonia	7	3	8
EUPOL COPPS Palestinian territories	124	13	64
EUBAM Ukraine-Moldova	179	36	27
EUBAM Rafah	95	17	231
AMM Aceh	658	107	935
Support to AMIS Sudan	122	64	2580
EUJUST LEX Iraq	86	11	52
EUSEC Congo	74	10	263
EUPOL Kinshasa Congo	50	4	124
EUFOR Althea Bosnia	275	266	4430
EUPOL Proxima Macedonia	16	191	45
ARTEMIS Congo	459	82	380
CONCORDIA Macedonia	327	205	569
EUPM Bosnia	890	308	355
ECMM/EUMM Balkans	3	1	3

COMPARATOR NATO MISSIONS	LEXIS NEXIS	WORLD NEWS CONNECTION	GOOGLE NEWS
ISAF (Afghanistan)	3000+	9596	158,000
"Essential Harvest" (in Macedonia)	1536	96	722
"Amber Fox"	323	100	114
"Allied Harmony"	47	100	94
"Allied Protector"	207	94	74
Pakistan earthquake relief	994	193	1140
*"Active Endeavour" (*detecting and deterring terrorist activity in the Mediterranean)	170	91	513
KFOR NATO (Kosovo)	997	2569	21,300
"Unified Protector" NATO (Libya)	1000	127	2,830
NTM-I (Iraq)	202	10	198
"Eagle Assist"	53	0	31

In raw figures, the CSDP missions got very little play in traditional media outlets such as newspapers, radio, and television. Of all the missions, only EULEX Kosovo had a hit number in the thousands in all three databases. Only eight missions out of 26 had hits in the hundreds in all three databases. Most comparable missions in NATO received similar numbers with the exception of the major military intervention in Afghanistan that numbered in the thousands in all three databases, and had numbers in five or six figures.

The Aceh mission's coverage was about average, but still poor over all. As one of the reporters in Indonesia put it, "the AMM mission was small part in the big picture of post-tsunami recovery operations in Aceh". While the mission itself received 935 hits in Google News, the words "Aceh" and "tsunami" together receive 38,400 hits.

With regard to the Aceh mission in particular, the content analysis shows that from the Lexis/Nexis database, 18 per cent of articles were EU member states, 53 per cent were from Indonesia, six per cent from Thailand, five per cent from Malaysia, three per cent from Thailand, and the rest were from the US, Australia, and China. In the great majority of cases, the articles were from wire services such as Antara, Associated Press, Agence France Presse, and Xinhua General News Service. The only newspaper with significant coverage of the mission was *The Jakarta Post*. Within the Lexis data set, 99 per cent of the coverage was positive, and 88 per cent was news as opposed to editorial, analysis or press release. However, the coverage itself was fairly brief: 39 per cent of the articles were under 300 words; only four per cent was over 1,000 words. A little over a third of the articles (37 per cent) had ten or more lines devoted to covering the actual mission.

From the World News Connection dataset, 37.7 per cent of the articles were from EU countries, 51 per cent were from Indonesia, and one per cent from other ASEAN countries. The rest was from other countries. The articles, like the Lexis dataset, were mostly positive: 97 per cent. Three per cent was analysis; the rest was news. In terms of length, the coverage was a bit more in depth than in the Lexis dataset: 53.6 per cent was over 500 words, but only 2 articles were over 1000. 45 per cent had ten or more lines on the mission itself. The majority of coverage came from two Indonesian journals, *Kompas*[30] and *The Jakarta Post*.

Considering that ASEAN was a co-sponsor of the mission, that it provided nearly half the monitors, and that the Deputy Head of Mission was Thai, the author found it astonishing that the Lexis/Nexis and World News Connection uncovered next to no articles published in English in ASEAN countries. To spread the net as wide as possible, she used two different search phrases: "Aceh AMM" and "Aceh Monitoring Mission", and also looked up the main English journals. A search for merely "Aceh" or the words without quotation marks resulted in articles on the region, but not on the mission itself. The *Bangkok Post* (Thailand), the *Manila Times* (Philippines), the *Daily Inquirer* (Manila, Philippines) and *The New Light of Myanmar* (Rangoon, Burma) had no coverage whatsoever. *The Nation*

[30] A translation of *Kompas* articles was included in the World News Connection database.

(Bangkok, Thailand) had one article, but it was an op-ed piece written by a Thai Senator. [31] The *New Straits Times* (Malaysia) had a total of eight articles, but three were written by Solana, and the rest were on the peace process in general with little mention of mission. The *Straits Times* of Singapore had nine articles, but, as in Malaysia, three were written by Solana, one by the Commissioner for External Relations, one from the UK High Commissioner, and the rest, like the *New Straits Times*, are on the peace process in general with little mention of mission.[32]

The "ASEAN way" – the premise of non-interference in internal affairs of other member states mean that ASEAN nations speak to each other informally rather than criticize each other or even discuss matters in public. Considering the sensitive nature of the peace agreement between the Government of Indonesia and the GAM, one can surmise that the governments and press of the ASEAN countries most likely chose to turn a blind eye to the mission. Even praise of the mission might sound like an endorsement of EU interference in the region and a tacit criticism of Jakarta. Jakarta was also paying for the per diems of the ASEAN monitors.[33]

Outside Southeast Asia, the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, a Hong Kong based Asian weekly with an international audience had no coverage of the story. The *South China Morning Post*, also based in Hong Kong but widely read in Southeast Asia published only four stories on the subject.[34]

Overall, considering the success of the mission, media coverage was limited.

Why CSDP Missions are Poor Vehicles for EU Promotion

CSDP missions are poor vehicles for EU promotion because the very nature of CSDP missions hinders press coverage for political, institutional, and logistical reasons. In other words, CSDP missions are politically sensitive, making news coverage imprudent or even, impossible. They can stymie the press officers who are hostage to the bureaucracy and their very locations make it difficult for journalists to cover, even when a crisis management mission is successful.

The fact that CSDP missions are the product of secret, multilateral negotiations dealing with politically sensitive crises means that the very construction of press releases and statements is fraught with danger as the wrong word could jeopardize the mission itself. First, they often begin as secret negotiations among diplomats behind closed doors. Therefore, there can be no build up in the press. Moreover, peace building is more likely to succeed if the facilitator has a low profile. The protagonists will be more likely to participate in a conference if they get the credit for the peace agreement rather than the EU or other international organization, non-governmental organization or other intermediary. In other words, EU promotion could endanger the mission.

Institutionally, once the situation is brought to the attention of EU member states, new closed-door negotiations begin to win the necessary support of the 27 of them. With unanimity the standard, agreement can be time consuming. Moreover, agreement does not mean that costs are shared: all CSDP missions are *de facto* coalitions of those willing to give donations and volunteers. To solidify support, the missions are often done on the cheap; PR is seldom a priority. Details, including the master messages are hammered out among the ambassadors of the Political and Security Committee (PSC). These lowest common denominator agreements result in officious, pre-fabricated news bites that do not publish well.

Logistically, it is expensive and dangerous for international and European journalists to cover the missions as they are, by definition, in the middle of a crisis and are often quite remote. The local press is

[31] The *Bangkok Post* was searched twice, once with Lexis/Nexis and a second time with the *Post*'s own search engine. *The Manila Times* was searched with ProQuest; its archive began the same day as the mission: 15 September 2005. The author also used ProQuest to search the Daily Inquirer's archives, but in this case, the archives for the Philippine newspaper began a few months after the onset of the mission on 1 January 2006. To search *The New Light of Myanmar* archives, the author used World News Connection, but their records only went back to December 2005. *The Nation* was searched using Asianet.

[32] The author searched both the *New Straits Times* and the *Straits Times* archives using Lexis/Nexis.

[33] Merikallio, 162.

[34] The author used ProQuest to search the archives of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, which although no longer in print, was in print during the time of the Aceh Monitoring Mission. The *South China Morning Post* was searched with Lexis/Nexis.

usually not very active because the crisis has curtailed its freedom, or because it was not very well developed in the first place, or both. In addition, the Brussels-based press officer may not speak the local language making interaction with local journalists difficult.

Finally, there are practicalities involved with each mission that minimize a mission's promotional capability. For example, in the Aceh Monitoring Mission, the EU press officer became the 'official' historian of the mission requiring perfect impartiality rather than EU promotion. In military missions, much of what goes on is secret; the military seldom broadcasts its strategy. In an executive mission such as EULEX Kosovo, more coverage is negative, in reaction to the rulings.[35]

The Aceh Monitoring Mission suffered from all these problems. Although it succeeded in bringing peace to the region, sadly, the mission received very little attention from the world.

Secrecy + Low Profile = Poor Public Relations Opportunities

Katri Merikallio describes in her book *Making Peace: Ahtisaari and Aceh* the origins of the EU-ASEAN Aceh Monitoring Mission. Peace had been elusive for decades, but a chance encounter with Finnish national Juha Christensen put the settlement on track. Christensen and his wife received posts as international language researchers sent to Sulawesi, an island in Indonesia, with the goal of charting the over 100 regional languages. In doing so, he learned Bahasa Indonesia fluently and made life-long friendships.

In the late 1990s, he became interested in Aceh, and, as luck would have it, met Farid Husain, Deputy Minister for Social Affairs. Husain was known for his role in settling earlier crises on other islands, and in a subsequent meeting in 2003, Christensen told him that he had contacts with the GAM, the Acehnese rebel group in Stockholm. In this discussion, former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari's name was first raised as a possible mediator. What Christensen did not know was that Jusuf Kalla, Indonesia's Vice President, had charged Husain with the secret task of making new contacts with the GAM leadership in Sweden. The Government of Indonesia was open to peace negotiations, but with stories of human rights abuses and a legacy of failed talks, it did not want to make its overtures public.[36] The issue was too politically sensitive.

The political sensitivity meant that the negotiations required secrecy. Merikallio has several photos of members of the GAM and the GoI standing in the snow, in January 2005, while partaking in closed negotiations at the Koeningstedt Manor in Vantaa, Finland. When asked why the talks took place in Finland, Ahtisaari answered, "It was necessary that the parties be isolated from the press." He explained the situation as mutually exclusive: "Both mediation team and parties had a choice – be nice to the press or work to try to solve real problems and find an agreement.[37] Only Ahtisaari spoke to the press, and only to say that the two sides were meeting. Ahtisaari explained: "There is always a great temptation for the parties to use the media in the negotiations. But if we start to announce via the media that we have demanded this or that of the other party, finding a solution will become ever more difficult."[38]

It was at this time that the EU was raised as a possible monitor for any peace agreement. The fact that the exiled GAM leaders were also naturalized Swedish citizens made the EU involved. Yet, these negotiations had to occur behind closed doors; they could not have succeeded in the public eye. Therefore, there could be no build up in the press of the EU's involvement in the mission. Any possibility of EU promotion was lost.

Keeping a low profile was conducive to a successful operation. Such was the lesson learned in the Council document of 2008 that drew on the Aceh experience. Recognizing the sensitive political environment and that the "mere deployment of such missions can sometimes trigger political reactions and/or create expectations", crisis missions must be planned in a confidential manner, to the point that transparency

[35] EULEX Kosovo has some of the most negative press coverage, most likely because of executive nature of the mission, handing out rulings that may be unpopular, and because several EU member states, Romania, Spain, Slovakia, Greece, and Cyprus, do not recognize Kosovo independence.

[36] Merikallio, 28-9.

[37] "Delivering Peace for Aceh: An Interview with President Marti Ahtisaari" in Aguswandi and Judith Large. "Reconfiguring Politics: The Indonesia-Aceh Peace Process." *Accord* 20 (2008), 23.

[38] Merikallio, 22.

"may have to be sacrificed, at least in the early stages."[39] Using CSDP missions to promote the EU could very well compromise the success of the missions themselves; the EU cannot be seen to take too much credit for the peace process. As Ahtisaari explained, "That is why I always praise the parties for the fact that this is an agreement between them. Nobody wants to be reminded afterwards that an outsider was needed to take care of their affairs. I learned that already in Namibia."[40]

The Problems of Intergovernmentalism: Secrecy, Diplomacy, and Bureaucracy

All CSDP missions are politically sensitive by definition, if for no other reason than that all the EU member states have different national interests. The Treaty on European Union sets out very clear decision making procedures with the perhaps contradictory goal of speaking with a common voice on international events, while at the same time not forcing a national capital's hand. As a result, all foreign and security policy decision making is characterized by diplomatic negotiations behind closed doors guided by specific processes to ensure no government will be publicly embarrassed or put under public pressure to change its policy. The press is not allowed in. Instead, once a decision is made, the PSC negotiates the wording of a press release to make sure all the nuances carefully wrought from the closed-door deliberations are properly conveyed in the media.

The EU has a *common* foreign and security policy, not a *single* policy. Much more than a semantic difference, the word 'common' denotes 27 separate, yet aligned policies, as opposed to a single EU policy. The trick to finding a common policy is pinpointing the lowest common denominator among the 27 states. Both the Treaty of Nice, which governed the Aceh mission, and the Lisbon Treaty in force today, have strong bureaucratic mechanisms to assure that no national government is forced to do anything against its national interest: "The common foreign and security policy is subject to specific rules and procedures. It shall be defined and implemented by the European Council and the Council acting unanimously".[41]

All CFSP statements and decisions are the product of deliberative, bureaucratic procedures, with the rather tame goal of "the achievement of an ever-increasing degree of convergence of Member State actions."[42] Nevertheless, any member state government may opt-out by abstaining from a vote.[43] Moreover, a state has a *de facto* veto if it declares that the proposed action is against vital, national interests.[44] Finally, even if a state votes in favour of a mission, there is no requirement that a member state contribute to the mission, either financially or with personnel.

With regard to the Aceh mission, although this was an EU mission, in fact, not all member states contributed, and two non-EU states, Norway and Switzerland, did. The CSDP is a shell for donated national capabilities. To date, there is no CSDP mission in which every EU member state participated. In each case, the hat must be passed around asking for donations and volunteers. Member state governments prefer intergovernmentalism in EU foreign policy because the national capitals are held responsible for foreign policy, especially when their citizens attached to these missions are risking their lives. When Ahtisaari first contacted Solana about the Aceh mission, "I told him about the negotiations and said that I had been taking up the name of the EU in this context. He said to go ahead but that you know, of course, that it is not me but the member countries that decide on these things."[45]

Secrecy and the Mission

The secrecy required in negotiating the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the GoI and the GAM stymied the planning of the monitoring mission itself. In other words, the MoU set out the role of the EU without consulting with the EU itself: "This created problems when [the] EU had to define the mandate of its mission in its planning documents, especially with

[39] Council 10114/08, 11-12.
[40] Merikillion, 141.
[41] Lisbon Treaty on European Union, article 24.1. In 2005, the CFSP was placed in its own pillar and governed by intergovernmentalism and unanimity away from the Community method of pillar I and any oversight by the Commission, the European Parliament and the Court of Justice. After the Lisbon treaty, unanimity still governs CFSP decision making, but the treaty introduced certain situations where qualified majority voting QMV) could take place. Despite these inclusions, the culture of the Council has always been that of unanimity in all areas of policy whether agriculture or foreign policy, QMV seldom occurs.
[42] Lisbon Treaty, article 24.2.
[43] Ibid., article 31.
[44] Ibid., article 31.2.
[45] Merikallio, 80.

regards to the monitoring of human rights."[46] In the end, EU officials were not allowed to read the terms of the agreement until officially signed on 15 August 2005, the start date of the mission.[47]

Understandably, some in the Political and Security Committee (PSC) were skeptical of the 'fait accompli' presented by Ahtisaari and Solana, whose MoU committing the EU to action was secret. The deliberation in Finland led to more closed door negotiations within the EU. One PSC ambassador asked numerous questions because he "had to make sure that there was a willingness to have them there."[48] Many member states were reluctant to get involved as they saw Indonesia as too far afield, and not in their general interest. Solana disagreed believing the mission to be tailor-made, and put all his weight behind it. Considering that the High Representative had 25 bosses, "you can't talk about leadership, because then you are lost. Rather, you have to be very pragmatic and show the route to take. It's the only way."[49] The French like this strategy: "Solana pushed for Aceh. It's his personality and his job. Solana is the mid-wife for the EU."[50] To quote another PSC diplomat who was convinced, "We can go from Balkans, to Aceh, to the Middle East. It shows flexibility. The only limit is lack of money. Now that we have the ambition, we want to use the instruments and to do something credible."[51] As another PSC diplomat described it: "There was opposition in the beginning. The General Secretariat railroaded the Member States to accept? Yes, there is some truth in that. Solana and Ahtassari wanted the mission and put the PSC under pressure. It was hard to say no. … In conclusion, yes, railroaded, but all's well that ends well."[52]

No member state vetoed the mission, but not all member states supported the mission with personnel and resources either. That is why the PSC negotiations are confidential and held behind closed doors, so as to give the impression of unity and not to embarrass any member state or bring undue public pressure on national governments to contribute. Therefore, no press is allowed, resulting in no press coverage. In any case, regarding Aceh, the press would only have reported the lack of consensus over how to fund the mission.

Public Relations: Lack of Funds and Lack of Personnel

In the case of Aceh, although the PSC ultimately approved the mission, finding funding and personnel was difficult. In hopes of gaining political influence over the operation, the Commission offered to fund the mission. The Council's legal service opposed the offer concerned that it might set a precedent "allowing the Commission to implement actions in the domain of ESDP and leading over time to the loss of national control over civilian crisis management."[53] However, the CFSP budget did not have enough to fully finance the mission.[54]

In the end, Solana intervened assertively to force the member states' hands. The Commission plan was abandoned, the money would come from the CFSP budget, and member states that were "willing and able" would cover the costs where they fell, and generous donations from two participating non-EU member states – Switzerland and Norway, would make up the difference. The mission comprised 125 EU and 93 ASEAN personnel. Twelve EU countries contributed: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The EU paid for operational costs and the per diems for its own monitors. The government of Indonesia paid the per diems of the ASEAN monitors, however, ASEAN member states paid the salaries of their monitors, as did the EU member states. Sweden provided logistics for the mission. Five out of ten ASEAN members

[46] Council of the European Union, "Draft Review of Recommendations for Enhancing Co-operation with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the Framework of EU Civilian Crisis Management and Conflict Prevention", 10114/08, 29 May 2008, 5-6.
[47] Pierre-Antoine Braud and Giovanni Grevi, "The EU Mission in Aceh: Implementing Peace" *Occasional Paper* no. 61, European Institute for Security Studies, Paris, December 2005, 21.
[48] Interview with PSC ambassador, 9 November 2005, Brussels, Belgium.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] French diplomat, interviewed 9 November 2005, Brussels, Belgium.
[51] Polish Foreign Ministry official, interviewed 8 November 2005, Brussels, Belgium.
[52] Interview with Dutch official from the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the European Union, 8 November 2005, Brussels, Belgium.
[53] Grevi, 26.
[54] Ibid.

contributed: Thailand, Malaysia, Brunei, Philippines, and Singapore. Dutchman Pieter Feith was Head of Mission with a budget of 15 million euros.[55]

The PSC was able to complete the decision-making process in six weeks, the fastest ever. Nevertheless, "progress on the ground quickly outpaced laborious negotiations in Brussels, somewhat pre-empting them."[56] Timing was an issue. The peace agreement was signed on 15 August 2005, but at this point, most of Brussels was away on summer holidays. Therefore, official decisions could only be made in the middle of September, and, without an official decision, there was no funding. Finland and the UK, which held the Council presidency at the time, sent a provisional team to Aceh to safeguard the peace process, but in doing so, the team was forced to pay its own way until an official budget was passed and they could be reimbursed.[57]

In her work on European public diplomacy, Mai'a David-Cross argued that member states are to blame for the low level of EU foreign policy exposure "because national-level public diplomacy rarely includes the EU in its messages to foreign publics."[58] This is the case because with regard to CSDP missions, member states bear almost all the risks, and so take the lion's share of the 'profits', that is the credit when a mission is successful. Most missions have a lead country, and that lead country will often coordinate press coverage at home using the government's large and sophisticated press office. In contrast, CSDP missions must manage with very few people. Significantly, since the first CSDP mission, the number of press officers, even today, has never exceeded four people.

Initially, there was no funding for press relations. In 2003, a few months into the first CSDP mission, EUPM Bosnia, the police mission, a German journalist knocked on the door of the headquarters and asked to speak with the press officer. When told the mission had none, the journalist volunteered and took the post.[59] It would be another four years until there was audio-visual for Council missions.[60] Traditionally, the Council secretariat had no communication budget because there was no need: the member states each had their own press team, and the Council did not implement policy like the Commission or debate it like the Parliament. However, Solana recognized that alongside the greater responsibility of running CSDP missions came the responsibility of explaining the missions to the public. Nevertheless, getting a line item for communication in the budget was problematic. PRINCE funding was for Commission projects; member states already had their own teams. Solana's press team was composed of one spokesperson and three officers, a total of four people.

Solana found a way to build in a communications budget into each joint action, alongside funding for transportation and supplies. When asking member states for personnel, some states would volunteer press officers, usually for a total of three. These three people would have no previous knowledge of either each other or the mission, and would have to be trained by Solana's press team in Brussels.[61]

With so little funds public relations was mostly an afterthought. The Council sent just one press officer to Aceh. Not only did he have to put all his costs, flight, hotel, etc., on his personal credit card until the official agreement and budget could be signed, but once he arrived, there was no office, and proper facilities. In the beginning, the EU subsisted on a shared computer and photocopier, and on the local World Bank office to check email. [62]

Luckily for the mission, there was more press interest than initially expected because the tsunami had brought many reporters to Indonesia. While reporting on the recovery and rebuilding efforts, many journalists found out about the peace agreement and wanted to cover it at the same time. To augment the press office of the mission, Germany sent a diplomat from its Jakarta embassy, and Great Britain sent an Indonesian who worked at the UK embassy adding to a total of three people. However, the German diplomat returned to his normal duties after several weeks, and it was only the Brussels-based press

[55] See AMM factsheet and Merikallio, 162.
[56] Grevi, 22.
[57] Grevi
[58] Dr. Mai'a K. Davis Cross, "EU Public Diplomacy: A Coherent Message?" Paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, Montreal, Canada, 2011.
[59] External Action Service official, 6 October 2011, Brussels, Belgium.
[60] EU official III, 11 October 2011, Brussels, Belgium.
[61] EU official I, 3 October 2011, Brussels, Belgium
[62] Interview with EAS official in Brussels on 7 October 2011.

officer and UK-loaned Indonesian spokesperson that covered the rest of the time. Although a major mission, the press team was small, and had no experience working together. In spite of the circumstances, they did their job very well, but certainly could have been more effective with more support from Brussels.

Risk Management in a Delicate News Environment

As Desmond Dinan once commented, the member states' response to international events has been "uninspiring and banal. The rhetoric of EPC is crammed with clichés: elections should always be "free and fair" … and peace should always be based on "sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity."[63] Little has changed in twenty years. Ashton states that Russia should hold "free and fair" elections,[64] and that the EU is committed to "the unity and sovereignty of Mali."[65] The contexts may change, but the words remain constant: they represent the approved language of European compromise. When translated into 23 languages, the message ossifies even further. Most importantly, the journalists cannot wait for the EU to negotiate a position: "Events in the Arab world may be moving with dizzying speed, but the job of building a European Union foreign policy will continue to travel at its own, glacial pace."[66] If journalists need to wait for a position before they can report it, or if turned away because there is "no news" as of yet, they will not spend their time, money and effort reporting on EU affairs.

The slow, cautious, and stilted statements are the product of risk management. One of the main jobs of the strategic communication unit of the EEAS, or StratCom, is coordinating the EU's message so that all entities are reading from the same page regarding the EU position. The former RIC – RELEX Information Committee has been changed to the External Relations Communications Committee. It coordinates the communication for all groups, including the member states. In turn, the small, three-person StratCom unit keeps the EU delegations/embassies all over the world to a common position on as many issues as possible. If these delegations are asked a question not addressed by the handbook or the common position, the delegation is to seek out an approved answer from Brussels. Heads of mission, ambassadors, and commission officials are not allowed to speak to journalists without prior approval. The PSC negotiates "master messages" for civilian missions originally drafted by the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC), and "communication strategies" for military missions drafted by the EU military staff (EUMS), to be approved by all the member states in order to guide press officers in Brussels and on the ground when dealing with journalists. As one member of StratCom explained, it is not about putting words in people's mouths, but "about getting the facts right."[67]

The main goal of StratCom is message control to avert risk of embarrassment. EU leaders cannot be embarrassed. Member state governments cannot be embarrassed. EU positions are the result of lengthy and behind-the-scenes diplomatic negotiations. As a result, the EEAS employs a one-way communication strategy that requires pre-approval before information is released. The situation is so dire, it sometimes seems comical: at the bottom of every *EU Security and Defence* newsletter that the EEAS publishes on a weekly basis, is the disclaimer: "The views expressed are not to be taken in any way to represent the official position of the European External Action Service."

Despite the fact that member states and EU leaders wanted to promote the CSDP missions, other needs and wants were more important. As several EU officials noted, member state leaders sought positive press for their governments back home in order to win the next election.[68] They also sought to save

63 Desmond Dinan, "European Political Cooperation", *The State of the European Community: Policies, Institutions, and Debates in the Transitions Years* Leon Hurwitz and Chritian Lequesne (eds.) (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner Press, 1991), p. 403.

64 Speech of High Representative Catherine Ashton on the situation in Russia to the European Parliament, Brussels, 01 February 2012, A 36/12.

65 Catherine Ashton EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission Speech on the situation in Mali European Parliament Strasbourg, 17 April 2012, http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/12/271 .

66 Stephen Castle "Lady in Waiting" Foreign Policy, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/03/31/lady_in_waiting

67 Interview with EAS official II in Brussels on 10 October 2011.

68 Almost every EU official I interviewed volunteered this assessment. Interview with EU official I, 3 October 2011, Brussels, Belgium.

money on CSDP missions whose costs had to be borne through extra funding mechanisms. These actions have repercussions. According to two journalists, the EU's desire to avoid risk and embarrassment in the form of 'bad' press leads to unidirectional information streams that stilt the communication and even alienate the press.[69] Whether the causality is correct or not, according to the International Press Association, or API, the number of accredited reporters covering the EU has declined by more than one-third since 2005.[70] According to the European Commission, the number of media outlets – television or radio stations or newspapers or magazines, represented has declined as well.[71] The result is an overall reduction in news coverage of the EU.

As one EEAS official explained, when he began at NATO, there were fifty press officers and two lawyers. Later, when he moved to the Council secretariat under Solana, he was struck that there were only two press officers and fifty lawyers. He used this example to demonstrate how the EU is much more concerned with risk aversion than self-promotion.[72]

Nor was Javier Solana universally loved for his promotion of CSDP missions, sometimes viewed as self-promotion. In 2007, the Council secretariat decided to make use of YouTube because it was cheap and easy. Javier Solana's video statement, unfiltered and direct to the people, was criticized by older officials who feared the transparency would hurt the Union as a whole. In the words of one official, "What are you doing? We are discreet diplomats. We cannot go public like that. We need to come to agreement with the 27 member states first." [73] A public environment hurts the chances of a diplomatic agreement being negotiated.

The EU press officer arrived in Aceh with a "master message" agreed upon in Brussels to guide his statements to the press. In the end, what was written up in the press would become the 'official' version of the mission. However, the press officer found the master message of limited use because it was so quickly overtaken by events. Once the journalists had heard the same message, once, twice, or even three times, they demanded to know how the mission was proceeding and to receive new information. The press officer had few options: ask the journalists to wait until he received new orders from Brussels; turn them away; tell them the unvarnished truth, or tell them the truth he thought would least embarrass or go against the master message. As an official explained, one must be flexible during crisis missions**.** A major issue for the press officers is time: the EU wants time to negotiate a position and the journalists want their questions answered before their deadlines. However, it is a tricky business; getting the facts wrong could embarrass politicians back home.[74]

It could also embarrass the parties involved as well. In many developing countries, where the majority of missions take place, the press is often not free. For example, foreign journalists and researchers require a special visa and approval of the topic ahead of time before entering Indonesia. To quote a retired General in Jakarta, "[Foreigners] take video pictures and speak unpleasant news around the province. The army's job is to guarantee unity of Indonesia and we are willing to do everything to make sure of that."[75] Allowing in outsiders was a great risk for the government, but the government had little choice considering that so many foreigners and foreign journalists had already entered the country either to aid or to cover the tsunami.

Logistics: Location, location, location, and timing

The remoteness of the CSDP operations also hindered international and European media coverage. Very simply, it is difficult for a journalist to get to the mission to report on it. For example, for the anti-piracy mission, Operation Atalanta, off the coast of Somalia, a journalist would have to fly to Djibouti, a very expensive and time consuming itinerary, and, even if he or she did manage to get in touch with the naval ships in the Gulf of Aden, a very big 'if' considering the poor transportation infrastructure, the ships were at sea, the limited government in the

[69] Interviews with two Brussels based journalists on 7 October 2011 and 5 March 2012.
[70] Stephen Castle, "As the E.U. does more, fewer to tell about it", *New York Times*, 22 March 2010. http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/23/business/global/23press.html?_r=1
[71] Statistics on accredited journalists from 2002-2011 from the European Commission, DG Comm, Service de Porte Parole, received on 16 February 2012 in email correspondence.
[72] Interview with EU official IV, 4 October 2011, Brussels, Belgium.
[73] EU official III, 11 October 2011, Brussels, Belgium.
[74] Interview with EU official.
[75] Merikillio, 68.

region as well as piracy, there were no satellites available to get the story back to Europe. With limited budgets and limited time, journalists often chose to direct their energies elsewhere. Moreover, back home at military headquarters in Norwood, England, the HQ had no desire to do media relations, especially considering that the headquarters was a secure building for guarding military secrets. However, Whitehall stepped in and insisted they speak to the press.[76]

The Council secretariat had its own strategy to get around the logistics issue. In 2007, they started sending in their own audio-visual teams to make footage for television broadcasts, always being sure to film soldiers speaking in their own language – Dutch, Danish, etc, and not the more widely spoken languages of English or French. The goal was to provide attractive footage for the local and national market. They would then call up national newspapers and say "Did you know there were Dutch soldiers in this CSDP mission?" Making the local connections was the only way to get on the news.[77]

With regard to the local media, in general, the missions get little press coverage for several reasons. First, very often, the crisis itself precludes the normal functioning of local media. In other cases, the press is not free. Another issue is language: depending upon the region, there may not be people in the EU press office who speak the appropriate language to give interviews or to follow the local press coverage. The EU tries to send people with the pertinent linguistic skills, but sometimes it is not possible. In Aceh, the Brussels press officer was lucky that the UK embassy in Jakarta sent over a press officer, an Indonesian national named Faye Belnis, who could speak to local journalists in Bahasa Indonesia. The Brussels-based press officer gave out statements in English. Since 1998, Indonesia also had a relatively free and active press.[78] Two of the main national journals, *The Jakarta Post* and *Kompass*, had a large number of articles. While ASEAN was a full participant, they sent mostly political appointees and military officers; they sent no communications officer.[79]

Timing is also an issue. To quote Andy Warhol, everyone has his fifteen minutes of fame, that is, publicity has a limited window of opportunity. In general, crisis missions are most interesting for the first month; after that, they are old news. The same held for the Aceh Mission. The first phase of decommissioning of weapons happened from 15-17 September 2005 when 243 weapons were turned in by GAM and approved by the AMM.[80] As one official described it, it was incredibly busy with over 100 interviews given out and photos taken.[81] Then, the news moment was over, and the photo ops of rebels handing over guns were gone. The seconded German diplomat went back to Jakarta, and the journalists went home.[82]

Practicalities of the Mission: Press Officers as Official Historians in Aceh

While Ahtisaari did not want the media involved during the negotiations, he did demand that the press be free to move about Aceh during the monitoring phase: "A vigilant press, a population that knew what the peace agreement was about and the total commitment of the parties would be the real guarantee of the agreement's success."[83]

However, the mission was extremely sensitive, so much so that Council Joint Action that authorized the mission warned: "The Aceh Monitoring Mission will be conducted in a situation which may deteriorate and could harm the objectives of the Common Foreign and Security Policy as set out in Article 11 of the Treaty". To be clear, the enumerated and endangered objectives were:

- to safeguard the common values, fundamental interests, independence and integrity of the Union in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter,

[76] Interview with official in the Council press office, 2011.
[77] EU officials I and III corroborated this point.
[78] Freedom House lists Indonesia as having a moderately free press, less free than the West, but freer than other ASEAN countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Brunei, or Vietnam. See Freedom House, Freedom of the Press 2012, www.freedomhouse.org.
[79] Interview with EAS official in Brussels in second interview on March 6, 2012.
[80] First phase of re-location and decommissioning completed: Press release – 27 September 2005, http://www.aceh-mm.org/english/headquarter_menu/press.htm .
[81] Interview with Andre Scholtz, German Foreign Ministry, email correspondence June 5, 2012.
[82] Interview with EAS official in Brussels on 7 October 2011.
[83] Merikillio, 96-7.

- to strengthen the security of the Union in all ways,
- to preserve peace and strengthen international security, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter, as well as the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the objectives of the Paris Charter, including those on external borders,
- to promote international cooperation,
- to develop and consolidate democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human right and fundamental freedoms.

Understandably, the staff was ordered to "act solely in the interest of the mission" and to "exercise the greatest discretion with regard to all facts and information relating to the mission."[84]

Moreover, the staff could not be merely passive observers. Part of the AMM's mandate was to rule on disputed amnesty cases, to investigate and rule on complaints of alleged violations of the MoU, and to establish and maintain good cooperation among the parties.[85] As active participants charged with making rulings, acting in the interest of the mission, and with discretion regarding information, the press officer was not tasked with promoting the EU as much as becoming the official and impartial historian of the mission.

For example, in one incident where people were shot and seriously injured, each side had a conflicting story to recount to the press officer. When there are two different versions, how does one determine what will be 'official'? As a referee, he had to try to establish what happened, which meant that the issue was raised in the Commission on Security Arrangements (COSA) meetings, the weekly and later monthly meetings of the heads of mission and the leaders of both sides. COSA was the centrepiece of the mission. If a problem arose, it was first discussed at this level. If there were still issues, it went to the district-level meeting, and so on up the ladder.

Press statements following COSA meetings were an important tool. In many cases, the press officer wrote them in advance of the meeting based on the agenda: "The parties discussed x, y, and z". At the end of each meeting, he would make changes, and amendments. In the case of a shooting incident, the commission would go over the different versions, and state that they would submit their own report to both sides within a certain number of days. The new report would go to the head of mission for approval, and then to the two sides for comments. In an example, the first press statement of the COSA was from 13 October 2005. It reported "A shooting incident in Jeuram, Nagan Raya was discussed. All parties agreed to fully cooperate on this issue. The parties are collecting information and have agreed to establish the facts before processing this issue further."[86] In the end, such press statements were not useful in getting press coverage, but they were instrumental in keeping the peace process on track. In doing so, the press officer kept to the mission's mandate: he put the interests of the mission first, above that of the EU itself, and he was discrete with the information. In other words, his not seeking to promote the EU was partly responsible for the overall success of the mission.

Conclusion: Successful missions require a low profile

In a briefing paper for the EU and ASEAN before the deployment of the AMM, Amnesty International welcomed one of the goals of the MoU in section 5.2 (d) to "monitor the human rights situation and provide assistance in this field".[87] It exhorted the monitors to document any violations or breaches. In the end, no truth and reconciliation tribunal was established, and human rights was pushed to the back burner, but perhaps for the best. Schulze explains that the EU's "lack of focus on implementing the human rights elements … made it possible for the AMM to complete its mission in the sensitive context of Indonesia domestic politics," and ascribes it as a "lesson learned".[88]

Justin Davies, Chief of Staff of the Monitoring Mission, attributes AMM's success to the principle of local ownership: "AMM was a peacekeeping operation and the deployment of foreign monitors or missions is

[84] See Joint Action 2005/643/ CFSP, article 5.3.
[85] See Joint Action 2005/643/ CFSP, article 2.
[86] Press Statement: On the outcome of the meeting of the Commission on Security Arrangements (COSA), Banda Aceh, 13.10.2005, http://www.aceh-mm.org/english/headquarter_menu/press.htm .
[87] Amnesty International, Indonesia: A briefing for EU and ASEAN countries concerning the deployment of the Aceh Monitoring Mission to Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam Province, ASA 21/017/2005.
[88] Schulze, International Policy Analysis. 1.

always a sensitive issue for a host country. Most of all, a successful peace process needs to be owned by the parties and the population concerned, not by foreign bodies. This concept of local ownership is a guiding principle of ESDP and one of great importance to AMM."[89]

Juha Christensen, the man who initiated the peace talks, believes in the importance of confidentiality to the peace process. He subsequently founded an NGO, Pacta, which highlights the value of private diplomacy: PACTA's approach is based on "confidentiality whenever necessary, transparency whenever possible."[90]

These three principles: sensitivity to the political situation, local ownership of the peace process, and confidentiality are key to a successful crisis management mission. All of these lessons learned focus on the need for the EU to be flexible, work in a secret environment, even to the point of sacrificing transparency, and keeping a low profile, if the peace building is to succeed. In other words, EU self-promotion is at odds with successful crisis management.

The EU is in a bind because Laeken Presidency conclusions asserted, rather melodramatically, that in order to bring the EU closer to its citizens, "The role it has to play is that of a power resolutely doing battle against all violence, all terror, and all fanaticism, but which also does not turn a blind eye to the world's heartrending injustices."[91] EU expeditions provide an opportunity for the EU to be 'seen' internationally; they also provide an opportunity for the citizen to become wrapped up in the human element of the story as well. Moral justice plays a large role in the formation of a protagonist in the creation of a national, or in this case, a European narrative. In other words, the EU must be seen as the 'good cop' in the media and in public statements. As Dan Nimmo and James Combes explained, the news media very often fulfill social and psychological functions more than intellectual or intelligence functions.[92]Laurent Boussié, Correspondent for France 2 in the UK, noted at a conference hosted by the Strategic Studies Institute, that the "media typically focus on 'sympathy' and 'emotional' issues without much regard for the whole truth."[93] By employing the "melodramatic imperative" in political news, i.e., describing international events as a dramatic story of good versus evil, of us versus them, the news creates an emotive force that can mobilize public opinion. Therefore, the viewer will identify with what is happening to the tourist, company, or diplomat internationally and see it as personally affecting him or herself. Chosen judiciously, the right international event could increase the EU's prestige and therefore enhance its identity.[94]

When carefully examined, perhaps one should not be surprised that successful crisis management runs counter to such a policy. If the EU is the 'good' cop, who, in a sensitive political environment, should be labelled the 'bad'? Melodrama may make for good television, but melodrama and crisis management usually create tragedy. Placing the emphasis on the success of the mission is the right lesson learned.

[89] Justin Davies, "The Aceh Monitoring Mission: Securing Peace and Democracy", *The European Union and Peacebuilding: Policy and Legal Aspects.* Steven Blockmans, Jan Wouters, and Tom Ruys (eds.) (The Hague: TMC Asser Press, 2010) 383.

[90] http://www.pacta.fi/mission

[91] European Council Presidency Conclusions, Laeken, 14-15 December 2001, Annex I.

[92] Dan Nimmo and James E. Combes, *Mediated Political Realities*, (New York: Longman, 1983) 16, as cited in William Bloom, *Personal Identity, National Identity, and International Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 177.

[93] Douglas V. Johnson II, "The Test of Terrain: The Impact of Stability Operations upon the Armed Forces," Conference Brief: Strategic Studies Institute, 16-18 June 2005, 2-3.

[94] Bloom, 84.

Bibliography

Aguswandi and Judith Large. *Reconfiguring Politics: The Indonesia-Aceh Peace Process*. London: Conciliation Resources, 2008.

Ahtisaari, Martti. "Lessons of Aceh Peace Talks", *Asia Europe Journal* 6, no.1 (2008): 9-14.

Amnesty International. *Indonesia: A Briefing for EU and ASEAN Countries Concerning the Deployment of the Aceh Monitoring Mission to Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam Provinces* (Amnesty International, 2005). Available at http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA21/017/2005/en/2716e4ce-d4af-11dd-8a23-d58a49c0d652/asa210172005en.pdf

Anderson, Stephanie. *Crafting EU Security Policy: In Pursuit of European Identity.* Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner, 2008.

Asseburg, Muriel, and Ronja Kempin. "The EU as a Strategic Actor in the Realm of Security and Defence? A Systematic Assessment of ESDP Missions and Operations." *German Institute for International and Security Affairs,* (2009). Available at http://www.swp-berlin.org/en/common/get_document.php?asset_id=6631

Bloom, William. *Personal Identity, National Identity, and International Relations*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Braud, Pierre-Antoine and Giovanni Grevi. "The EU Mission in Aceh: Implementing Peace", European Union Institute for Security Studies *Occasional Paper* 61, (2005).

Davies, Justin. "The Aceh Monitoring Mission: Securing Peace and Democracy", *The European Union and Peacebuilding: Policy and Legal Aspects* (Steven Blockmans, Jan Wouters, Tom Ruys, eds.) 375-383. The Hague: TMC Asser Press, 2010.

Davis-Cross, Mai'a. "EU Public Diplomacy: A Coherent Message?" Paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, Montreal, Canada, 2011.

De Vreese, Cleas, and Hajo G. Boomgaarden. "Media Effects on Public Opinion about the Enlargement of the European Union", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 44, no.2 (2006): 419–36.

Dinan, Desmond. "European Political Cooperation", *The State of the European Community: Policies, Institutions, and Debates in the Transitions Year.* Leon Hurwitz & Christian Lequesne (eds.). Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner Press, 1991.

European Union Institute for Security Studies. *European Security and Defence Policy: The First 10 Years (1999-2009)*. Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2009.

Feith, Peter. *The Aceh Peace Process: Nothing Less than Success* (Special Report 184). United States Institute for Peace, March 2007.

Hedman, Eva-Lotta. "Deconstructing Reconstruction in Post-Tsunami Aceh: Governmentality, Displacement, and Politics", *Oxford Development Studies* 37, no.1 (2009): 63-76.

Lahdensuo, Sami. "Building Peace in Aceh - Observations on the Work of the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) *and its liaison with local civil society*", *Crisis Management Initiative* (2006). Available at http://www.cmi.fi/images/stories/publications/reports/2006/AMM_report.pdf

Merikallio, Katri. *Making Peace: Ahtisaari and Aceh*. Juva: WS Bookwell Oy, 2006.

Niemi, Tommi. “Reintegration in Aceh Indonesia : Opinions of the Finnish civilian crisis management experts”, *Crisis Management Centre Finland* 2, no.4 (2009): 92-109.

Pirozzi, Nicoletta, and Damien Helly. “Aceh Monitoring Mission: a New Challenge for ESDP”, *International Security Information Service,* no. 25 (2005): 3-5.

Schulze, Kirstin. “Mission Not So Impossible the Aceh monitoring and Mission and Lessons learned for the EU” *International Policy Analysis* (2007). Available at http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id/04786.pdf

Schulze, Kristin. *Mission Not So Impossible: The AMM and the Transition from Conflict to Peace in Aceh, 2005-2006,* Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (2007). Available at http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=cab359a3-9328-19cc-a1d2-8023e646b22c&lng=en&id=35075

Schulze, Kristin E. “AMM (Aceh, Indonesia)”, *European Security and Defence Policy: The First 10 Years (1999-2009)*, edited by Giovanni Grevi, Damien Helly and Daniel Keohane, 265-274. Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2009.

Established in 2008, the EU Centre in Singapore is a joint project of the European Union, the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU), and is part of a worldwide network of EU centres and EU institutes. We aim to promote knowledge and understanding of the EU and its impact on Singapore and the region, through activities revolving around outreach, education and research.

As part of our public outreach activities, the Centre organises an ongoing series of talks, lectures and seminars. The Centre contributes to education and research on the EU through organising academic conferences and by publishing background briefs, working papers, and policy and research briefs.