



The Strategic Planning of EU Military Operations - The Case of EUFOR TCHAD / RCA

Alexander Mattelaer

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ABSTRACT

On 28 January 2008 the European Union launched the military operation EUFOR in Chad and the Central African Republic. Its mandate was to contribute to the security of the civilian population, the numerous refugees from neighboring Darfur and the local presence of the United Nations. This paper describes and analyses the planning process of this operation at the political-strategic and military-strategic levels with the aim of understanding how the military instrument was intended to generate the desired political effects. The paper argues that, from a military perspective, the EUFOR operation is based on the concept of humanitarian deterrence: the threat of military force is used to discourage potential spoilers from targeting the civilian population. As with any military operation, the planning of EUFOR was plagued by various elements of friction. At least some of this friction seems to flow from the mismatch in expectations between the political-strategic and military-strategic levels. The various political and military-technical constraints within which the operation was planned resulted in an operational posture that is less decisive than what the political ambitions would have suggested.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMIS	AU Mission in Sudan
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
CIS	Communications and Information Systems
CMC	Crisis Management Concept
CONOPS	Concept of Operations
CPCO	Centre de planification et de conduite des opérations
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
EUMC	EU Military Committee
EUMS	EU Military Staff
FHQ	Force Headquarters
GAERC	General Affairs and External Relations Council
IDP	internally displaced person
MINURCAT	Mission des Nations Unies en République centrafricaine et au Tchad
MSO	Military Strategic Option
OHQ	Operation Headquarters
OPLAN	Operation Plan
PSC	Political and Security Committee
QRF	Quick Reaction Force
SASE	Safe and Secure Environment
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur

1 INTRODUCTION¹

In the course of 2008, the European Union (EU) launched a military operation in eastern Chad and the northeast of the Central African Republic (CAR), codenamed EUFOR Tchad/RCA.² On the one hand, this paper will provide a detailed overview of the planning process of this operation. How did we get from the political decision-making process to the arrival of a sizeable, multinational force in the middle of the desert, thousands of kilometres away, several months later? On the other hand, this paper analyses the military strategy of the operation - i.e. how the operation intended to achieve the desired political effect through the (threatened) use of military force.³ Planning and strategy are intimately interlinked. In a general sense, planning is looking into the future and mitigating the course of future events through policy measures. In the context of a military operation, this is precisely what strategy is about. It is in the planning phase of an operation that political and military affairs meet. Policymakers set the aims and allocate the resources, whereas the military constitutes the instrument to implement the chosen policy. Strategy is the nexus where all this comes together. It encompasses the political debate over ends and means as well as the military discussion over how these can be linked together in a causal framework of action and effect. At the level of the analytical framework, therefore, the focus of this study is on the *political-strategic level* of the EU institutions and the *military-strategic level* of the Operation Headquarters (OHQ) level.⁴

This paper cannot hope to cover all issues relevant to crisis management in Chad in detail. It can only briefly introduce the conflict in Chad itself. The role of the United Nations (UN) in managing the regional conflict will be mentioned insofar as necessary to understand the role EUFOR plays in the broader efforts of the international community. In the same vein, this paper does not venture into the tactical level on the ground. It will not discuss at length the practical details that the EUFOR soldiers struggle with on a daily basis. This is not to say that these various issues do not merit discussion. The main interest here, however, is to dissect the planning process of EUFOR at political-strategic and military-strategic levels in order to gain an understanding of how the operation intended to achieve its objectives.

¹ This paper is entirely based on open source, non-classified information and material gathered during a series of 18 research interviews with diplomatic and military officials conducted in the period July-October 2008. All interviews were held under Chatham House rule, i.e. based on the understanding that all received information could be used freely but without revealing the identity or position of the person interviewed. Next to the interviewees, without whom this project would have been impossible, the author wishes to thank Sven Biscop from the Egmont Institute and Eva Gross from the IES as well as a number of officials from the Belgian armed forces for their instructive comments on earlier versions of this paper.

² In this paper the shorthand 'EUFOR' will be used to refer to EUFOR Tchad/RCA. Whenever there can exist any confusion with other EU operations the full names will be used.

³ Although there exist heated semantic discussions about the concept of strategy (see Strachan 2005 and Biscop 2007), this discussion uses the word in the narrow military sense coined by Clausewitz 1976 and developed by, inter alia, Gray 1999.

⁴ In terms of the levels of analysis, this paper will follow the definitions offered by the *EU Concept for Military Planning at the Political and Strategic Level*. Herein the political-strategic level is located at the Brussels institutions, the military-strategic level at the OHQ, the operational level at the Force HQ (FHQ) and the tactical level at the component HQ. The distinction between military-strategic and operational levels is somewhat confusing and can be disputed on historical as well as theoretical grounds (cf. Strachan 2005).

The relevance of this research, consequently, lies in enhancing the understanding the usefulness and limitations of military operations in the toolkit of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Contrary to the well-developed body of work focussing on how to manage the transition from conflict to peace,⁵ the paper zooms in on the issue of military strategy in crisis response operations. EUFOR, for that matter, is the most recent, longest and largest autonomous military operation the EU has conducted so far. Considering the setting, both in terms of geography and the conflict background, a convincing case can be made that it is the most challenging and complex operation of the EU to date. In that sense, this paper gives an update of where the ESDP stands in developing the machinery for conducting military operations. The case study of EUFOR then sheds light on how the translation from the political aims into military reality in one particular setting can look like, and by what problems this process it can be plagued.

In a nutshell, this paper argues that the procedurally well-developed ESDP planning system in the case of EUFOR suffered from a mismatch in expectations between the political-strategic and military-strategic level. On the political level, EUFOR was motivated by a variety of considerations. Most EU member states were not willing to devote substantial resources to the operation, but consented to what was essentially a French-driven initiative as long as some political restraints were met (i.e. impartiality and limited duration). The lowest common denominator in terms of mission objectives was to contribute to a Safe and Secure Environment (SASE). Within this political context, the planning of the operation at the military-strategic level resulted in an operational design based on the use deterrence for humanitarian purposes. The threat of military force would be used to discourage potential spoilers from engaging in any action that would undermine the security of the civilian population. The military planning system performed well in the face of major conceptual and practical hurdles that can be labelled under the heading of 'friction'. Planning assumptions were uncertain, objectives were vague, no end-state was defined, the force generation suggested problems in political credibility, and multinational command and control arrangements were characteristically difficult. Within these parameters, an operation plan was produced for coping with a complex conflict environment. However, this process implied a sense of realism about the limited role that EUFOR could play that unavoidably stands in contrast with grand political expectations.

The structure of the discussion looks as follows. The first section describes the context of the operation. This includes a short introduction to the multi-layered conflict environment. It subsequently discusses the distinct roles played by other major players: the UN in charge of managing the regional conflict and France in its national role as former colonial power. The second section details the planning process of EUFOR. It starts by briefly introducing the ESDP operational planning process. It subsequently discusses the political-strategic debate in Brussels about whether to do the operation and for what purpose. This is complemented by an overview of the operational design on the military-strategic level. An overview of the highly politicised force generation process closes the second section. In the third section, the overall military strategy of 'humanitarian deterrence' is analysed from a conceptual perspective. It is discussed how the notion of deterrence can be framed in a context of expeditionary crisis management. The fourth section draws together various problematic issues in the planning process under the Clausewitzian concept of friction. It gives a non-exhaustive overview of some aspects in the operational planning that are highly

⁵ E.g. Paris 2004.

problematic from a military or a political perspective. At this point, a number of general conclusions will be outlined.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Multilayered Conflict in Chad and the CAR

In the east of Chad and the northeast of the CAR, around 240,000 refugees from Darfur region in the neighbouring Sudan and a rapidly rising number (170,000 by mid-2007) of internally displaced persons (IDPs) flocked together in camps after having been uprooted by violence and generalised insecurity. Contrary to the misunderstanding that the situation in Chad is no more than a simple spill-over from the war in Darfur, the conflict context underlying this insecurity and corresponding population movements can be qualified as multilayered and highly complex.⁶ For analytical purposes, we can distinguish between (i) a multitude of local conflicts between various groups in areas that historically have known practically no effective governance, (ii) the various national conflicts for power that take place inside these states and (iii) the permanently ongoing confrontation between the states in the region, notably Chad and Sudan. It is important to keep in mind that all these conflicts occur simultaneously and consequently mutually affect each other. This omnipresence of armed activities fuels a systemic cycle of non-governance, criminality and impunity.

In order to understand the security situation in the area it is useful to start at the local level. The Sahelian countries of Sudan, Chad and the CAR share borders drawn by former colonial powers that bear no relation to the ethnic demography of the region. Chad and the CAR can be qualified among the poorest countries in the world. This leaves state authorities with little resources to effectively govern their large territories. Demographical factors coupled to an intense competition for agricultural land, food and water lead to the widespread existence of conflict between local tribes. This level of violent conflict resides below national politics and can be interpreted as a struggle for survival in an extremely harsh environment. It is nearly impossible to draw a clear distinction between tribal fights on the one hand and criminality and banditry on the other.

These small local conflicts exist alongside politically inspired rebellions. The regimes of Idriss Déby in N'Djamena (Chad), François Bozizé in Bangui (CAR) and Omar al-Bashir (Sudan) all face a multitude of rebel insurgencies. Historically speaking, insurgency comes close to being a permanent feature of politics in the Sahel. Chad has been riddled by civil wars most of the time since it became independent from France in 1960. In fact, not a single Chadian Head of State since independence acquired his position through non-violent means.⁷ Although these insurgencies are often portrayed as a simple confrontation between the Christian-African, agricultural south and the Arabic, nomadic north, their origin lies more in the socio-economic and political marginalisation of the peripheral regions of the country.⁸ Furthermore, the limited ability of the state authorities to provide effective governance over the entire territory, especially the lack of an effective police and legal system, provides an ideal breeding ground for rebel movements dissatisfied with the status quo. The trigger to the current rebellions in Chad was the decision of president Déby in

⁶ For in-depth analysis, see International Crisis Group 2008.

⁷ Handy 2008.

⁸ Prunier 2007a; 2008.



Figure 1. Map of Chad and planned EUFOR positions⁹

2004 to amend the constitution and to run for a third term.¹⁰ The ensuing political alienation revitalised armed rebellion as means to express political grievances. Yet it is also crucial to bear in mind the fractious nature of this opposition to Déby. The various rebel groups do not form a coherent force and are united only in their opposition to the current regime. The hard core of fighters with refuge on the Sudanese side of the border reportedly

⁹ Based on UN map N° 3788 Rev. 7.

¹⁰ Handy 2008.

numbers between 3,000 and 5,000 men armed with machine guns and Toyota pick-up trucks. They pose a considerable threat to the regimes in power as the regular armed forces, though numerically superior, are of limited effectiveness.¹¹ While these armed rebel groups have no interest in targeting the civilian population in Chad, they need to sustain their operations by 'living off the land', which often comes down to looting and preying on the civilian population.

It is commonly accepted that the existence of a safe haven in a neighbouring country is of tremendous value for a rebel movement or insurgency. The highly porous Chadian-Sudanese border in this light seems like a recipe for trouble. It constitutes a remote and inhospitable area over which state authorities never had much control, with tribal affiliations ranging across the border in both directions. In 1990, the Chadian president Déby staged his own coup on N'Djamena from within Darfur. Historically, Déby's ensuing regime was dependent on support from France and Sudan.¹² When the war in Darfur in western Sudan erupted in 2003, Déby originally supported the Sudanese crackdown on the Darfuri rebels. But as many of the Darfur insurgents belonged to Déby's own tribe, the erosion of popular support for his own regime forced him to distance himself from Sudan. As the rebels from Darfur increasingly started using eastern Chad as their operating base and opposition against Déby rose, the situation slid into a condition of proxy warfare. Both governments accuse each other of - and are generally believed to be - arming rebel factions and offering safe havens on their territories, which has led to regular cross-border raids.

2.2 Regional Conflict Management by the UN

International involvement in the regional crisis started in the aftermath of the outbreak of the war in Darfur, and has taken many different shapes since then. The African Union (AU) undertook the first peacekeeping efforts in Darfur with the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS). As this relatively small operation rapidly acquired a reputation of ineffectiveness, Resolution 1769 of the UN Security Council transformed AMIS into the AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). The authorized troop strength was correspondingly raised from AMIS's 7,700 to 26,000 (military and police contributions combined). At present, however, it seems that UNAMID, currently 10,000 strong, is plagued by much the same problems as AMIS.

Already in 2006, when the UN first contemplated taking over AMIS, the establishment of a multidimensional presence in Chad and the CAR was already evoked.¹³ From a military perspective, it made little sense to try and stabilise a given area, when the proxy war could continue across the border. As there seemed to be a relatively positive dynamic in Chad in the first half of 2007, the UN Secretariat came up with the plan of complementing the UNAMID deployment with an operation in eastern Chad. In the first outline of the plan, this multidimensional presence would encompass three components: civilian, police and military.¹⁴ The civilian pillar would become active in the domain of civil affairs, rule of law, human rights, humanitarian liaison and public information. The police pillar would involve some 300 international UN police officers training, mentoring and/or advising Chadian and CAR police staff in exercising a minimum level of order in and around the refugee camps.

¹¹ Seibert 2007, 15.

¹² Prunier 2007b.

¹³ Cf. UN Security Council Resolution 1706 (2006).

¹⁴ UN 2007a.

The military pillar, finally, would provide an umbrella of relative security under which the UN and the humanitarian aid community could achieve their objectives. In the first estimations, such a military force would involve an expanded brigade (some 6,000 troops) with a significant air component for enhanced mobility (option A) or an infantry division (10,900 troops) which would rely more on infantry presence and less on air mobility (option B).

Early on, it became clear that Chadian president Déby was unfavourable to a military presence by the UN.¹⁵ It was in this context that EUFOR, under French lead, would eventually come to serve as a politically more palatable alternative to a military operation under UN flag. In the light of the historical relationship between France and Chad (cf. infra), the Chadian regime viewed a French-led force with less suspicion than an operation run by the UN. Subsequent developments led to a situation where the EU operation would provide the military security umbrella, whereas the political and humanitarian pillar would work through various channels (the UN, the European Commission and their various representatives and the NGO community). Finally, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations would run the police mission MINURCAT (United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad). MINURCAT would be composed of 300 police and 50 military liaison officers and would be tasked to train and advise elements of the *Police tchadienne pour la protection humanitaire* (relabelled into the *Détachement intégré de sécurité*) and to liaise with all actors involved. This Chadian police force was intended to become 850 strong in order to provide security in the refugee and IDP camps.

Once this multidimensional presence moved into deployment phase, it soon became clear that the UN police mission MINURCAT was much slower in becoming operational than EUFOR. The delay in the deployment of the Chadian gendarmerie units was consequently even bigger. Small-scale violence and banditry that needed to be tackled by police units rather than EUFOR's attack helicopters thus continued even when EUFOR was in place.¹⁶ In what follows, it should therefore be kept in mind that EUFOR plays but one part in a broader scheme, i.e. that of providing a military security umbrella in Chad and the CAR. If anyone, it is the UN that tries to manage the regional conflict. The UN does so with the various instruments it has at its disposal but it also faces daunting challenges. These problems reach from military overstretch to the political unwillingness that can be detected on the side of the local governments - who, after all, remain the primary actors in this conflict.

2.3 The Double Role of France in Context

France played a key role in putting the situation in Chad on the agenda of the EU. For this reason, it is well warranted to highlight some elements of immediate relevance in the historical relationship between France and Chad. From independence in 1960 onwards, Chad - like most other former French colonies - signed various military assistance agreements with France. These bilateral agreements allowed France to keep military bases in the territory, as well as have rights to transit and over-flight. In return France guaranteed external territorial security to its colonies and would consider all requests for assistance in the face of insurgencies and coup attempts. In addition, France provided equipment, training and advice to the Chadian armed forces. On several occasions during

¹⁵ UN 2007a, § 33.

¹⁶ Oxfam 2008.

the Cold War, France launched military interventions in Chad to maintain stability or keep an embattled regime in power.¹⁷ In the context of Chadian-Libyan tensions, France in 1986 deployed *Operation Epervier*, a military task force with a heavy air component. It has remained stationed in Chad until the present day.

In the spring of 2007 Nicolas Sarkozy won the French presidential election and assumed office on 16 May. Bernard Kouchner is appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who in the past had frequently voiced grave concern about the regional crisis around Darfur. On 21 May 2007, all foreign offices of EU member states receive word from Paris about a proposal to do something in eastern Chad. In the words of one interviewee, “Kouchner played a *crucial* role in pushing for the deployment of EUFOR”. Against the background of the historical relationship between Chad and France, the eventual EU operation would come to play a limited role in a more complex scheme of French Africa policy. The humanitarian efforts in the area enjoyed widespread support in the international community, making the UN and the EU the obvious policy vehicles. More sensitive issues, such as military assistance, would necessarily remain a part of the bilateral French-Chadian relationship. In this framework, EUFOR would simply be deployed alongside Epervier. Each operation would have its own mission description.

The complexity of this situation became clearest when a coalition of rebels attacked N’Djamena on 2 February 2008. Several analysts suggest it was precisely the perceived ambiguity about EUFOR’s role that triggered the rebels to attack at the time EUFOR was starting its deployment: even the humanitarian work and associated stability was expected to benefit Déby more than it would the rebels. The attack on N’Djamena meant that Paris was caught between two sides. On the one hand there was pressure from its European partners not to compromise EUFOR’s imposed neutrality by intervening on behalf of Déby. On the other hand there were Déby’s requests for assistance, which France had honoured in the past - most recently in 2006. As a result, actions were seen on both fronts. Firstly, French Epervier forces most likely provided indirect support (i.e. intelligence, logistical support and advice) to the Chadian armed forces that were fighting the rebels, but refrained from entering into direct combat themselves.¹⁸ Through simultaneous lobby work France obtained the approval of the UN Security Council for a direct intervention if this would have been required in the near future.¹⁹ Secondly, the French EUFOR Force Commander underlined in straightforward terms that EUFOR would not meddle in the conflict between Déby and the rebels but was only there to protect the civilian population and the UN.

¹⁷ Collelo 1988a.

¹⁸ Arteaga 2008; Handy 2008.

¹⁹ *Le Monde* 2008.

3 THE PLANNING PROCESS OF EUFOR

With this background in mind, it is time to turn to the focus of this discussion, namely the planning of EUFOR. The central question is how EUFOR was intended to achieve its political objectives. In order to structure the discussion, we will follow the different steps in the planning process. The first subsection therefore briefly outlines how this process looks like in theory. The second subsection focuses on the initiation phase at the political-strategic level in Brussels. The third subsection sketches the lines along which the operational planning was conducted at the military-strategic level. The focus here lies on how the OHQ interpreted its political guidance and conceptually developed an operational design. The fourth subsection deals with the force generation process, where the political-strategic and military-strategic levels met.

3.1 The ESDP Operational Planning Process

In order to meet the complex challenge of planning operations, military institutions have developed a body of doctrine and procedures. The ESDP structures are not different in this regard: a planning process has been developed and is regularly revised. As most EU member states are also NATO members, ESDP planning procedures are very strongly inspired or simply copied from the available NATO doctrine. This subsection sketches a broad outline of how the operational planning process works in the case of military ESDP operations.²⁰



Figure 2. Operational Planning Disciplines

As outlined in Figure 1, operational planning is divided into two major consecutive disciplines: advance planning and crisis response planning. *Advance planning* relates to the planning for possible security threats. In the ESDP framework, this can assume the form of either *generic planning* (drawing up catalogues of what capabilities are available for ESDP operations and comparing those with those that are required for pre-identified standard scenarios)²¹ or *strategic contingency planning* (ongoing monitoring of the security environment and drawing up non-detailed contingency plans to inform political decision-making). Once the political level, embodied by the 27 national ambassadors sitting in the Political and Security Committee (PSC), decides that “EU action is appropriate”, the switch is made from advance planning to *crisis response planning*. This concerns the development of a response to an actual crisis, the end result being a detailed Operation Plan (OPLAN) ready for execution. Crisis response planning is itself a multi-layered process. At the

²⁰ The crucial documents in this regard are the *Suggestions for Crisis Management Procedures*, the *EU Concept for Military Planning at the Political and Strategic Level* and the *EU OHQ Standing Operating Procedures*.

²¹ Giegerich (2008, 16-22) offers a detailed description of this branch of planning.

political-strategic level, political authorities in consecutive steps define the broad outlook of the operation. At the various military levels below - military-strategic, operational and tactical - an iterative process is started in which the guidance from the level above is analysed and translated into plans of increasing levels of detail.

The first step in the political-strategic initiation of crisis response planning is the development of a *crisis management concept* (CMC). This is a policy document agreed by the PSC containing a political and military assessment of the situation. As such it is a multi-pillar document outlining the role of the different instruments the EU has at its disposal for reacting to the crisis. The Council Secretariat (DG E VIII), the EU Military Staff and Military Committee (EUMS and EUMC) together provide the military input to the debate. After adoption by the PSC it is validated by the Council of Ministers under the GAERC format (General Affairs and External Relations Council). Following CMC approval, the EUMS is tasked with the development of *Military Strategic Options* (MSOs). These are possible outlines of military action designed to achieve the politico-military objectives outlined in the CMC. They outline the military course of action and required resources. These options are prioritised by the EUMS and commented upon by the EU Military Committee (EUMC). Subsequently, they are put forward to the PSC for debate and the GAERC validates the chosen option. After this the *Joint Action* can be produced: a legal act by which the Council formally establishes the operation, appoints the operational commanders and OHQ and fixes a reference amount for the common costs inherent to the operation.²² The EUMC, supported by the EUMS, translates the Joint Action into an *Initiating Military Directive* (IMD). This document provides military guidance for the Operation Commander. This process is summarised in Figure 3 below.²³

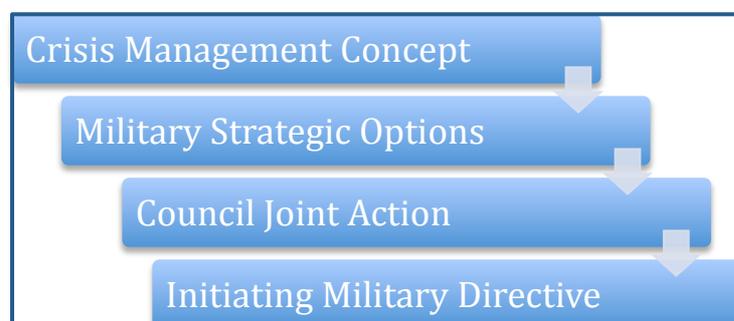


Figure 3. Crisis response planning at the political-strategic level

From this point onwards, the various headquarters (OHQ at the military-strategic and FHQ at the operational and tactical level) can kick into action. In terms of doctrine, the EU OHQ Standard Operating Procedures essentially follow the NATO Guidelines for Operational Planning. The first step is a detailed analysis of the guidance given by the level above (orientation phase). Secondly, different courses of action are developed and compared with one another (concept development). Thirdly, the preferred course is developed into a plan (plan development). Fourthly, plans receive regular reviews when they are put into practice (plan review). At the military-strategic level of the OHQ, the key documents

²² The notion of operational commanders refers to the Operation Commander who is responsible for the overall design of the operation and functions as the politico-military interface in the planning and conduct of the operation, and the Force Commander who directly commands the forces deployed on the ground in theatre.

²³ Based on the *EU Concept for Military Planning at the Political and Strategic Level*.

produced in this process are thus the *Concept of Operations* (CONOPS) and the *Operation Plan* (OPLAN). The CONOPS is a concise statement of how the Operation Commander intends to fulfil his mission whereas the OPLAN is the highly detailed script of the entire operation. Both the CONOPS and the OPLAN are approved by the EUMC and politically endorsed by the PSC and the Council. This process is visualised by Figure 4 below.



Figure 4. Crisis response planning at military-strategic level

In parallel to the process of plan development, but separate from it, runs the process of *force generation*.²⁴ Alongside the CONOPS, the Operation Commander produces a provisional *Statement of Requirement* indicating the means he needs in order to be able to fulfil the mission. In a series of force generation conferences - a process not limited in time - the participating member states pledge assets and capabilities for the operation in a dynamic of supply and demand. Once plan development is completed, the OPLAN validated and all the essential (mission-critical) elements of the Statement of Requirement are fulfilled, the Council of Ministers can formally launch the operation.

Before turning to the case of EUFOR, a brief note should be made about the EU's capacity in strategic contingency planning. While the EU Military Staff was already tasked with strategic advance planning since its inception, in practice it was only allowed to do so in specific cases once the decision that 'EU action is appropriate' had been taken. The reason for this is that the Council does not want to signal future action too soon. Of course, the problem with this set-up is that this very decision about appropriateness cannot be taken without a basic assessment of the situation and what can possibly be done about it. At the informal EU defence ministerial in Wiesbaden in March 2007, it became clear that it was required "to get the first bit of planning right".²⁵ Correspondingly, at the GAERC in November 2007 the EUMS received wider authority to engage in strategic contingency planning as outlined above.²⁶ With regards to the timing, it should be kept in mind that this strategic contingency planning capability was not yet up and running when the discussions about a possible operation in Chad started. As a result, the planning for EUFOR Tchad/RCA started in a more ad hoc mode.

²⁴ The reference document is the *EU Concept for Force Generation*.

²⁵ Summary of remarks by Javier Solana 2007.

²⁶ Council Conclusions on ESDP 2007, 6.

3.2 The Political-Strategic Initiation Phase of EUFOR

As already indicated, the very first mentioning of the idea of conducting an ESDP operation in Chad can be found in a diplomatic cable the French ministry of foreign affairs sent to all other EU foreign ministries on 21 May 2007. For the German presidency this was clearly no priority, but the incoming Portuguese presidency put the proposal back on the agenda. The Council Secretariat and the Commission were tasked to propose a catalogue of possible actions. In the words of one official, this involved both “killing the stupid ideas” (such as a no fly zone or a humanitarian corridor) and “proposing something useful and coherent with the instruments we have”. A jointly drafted Options Paper was released the 13th of July. In this document, the security dimension was especially emphasised, as this was felt to be the wish of the initiating member state. At the GAERC of 23 July, the Council Secretariat was

EUFOR Planning Milestones²⁷

21 May 2007	France suggests an initiative for Chad
13 July 2007	joint Council-Commission Options Paper
23 July 2007	GAERC gives planning authority to Council Secretariat
27 July 2007	PSC issues CMC tasker
3 Sept 2007	OHQ pre-activation
10 Sept 2007	PSC approves CMC and gives planning authority to Mont Valerien OHQ
12 Sept 2007	Council approves CMC; MSO paper is released
24 Sept 2007	indicative force generation conference; draft mission analysis brief reviewed
25 Sept 2007	UN Security Council approves Resolution 1778
4 Oct 2007	MSO 3 adopted
15 Oct 2007	Council issues Joint Action; Operation Commander arrives in OHQ
23 Oct 2007	Initiating Military Directive issued by EUMC
8 Nov 2007	PSC adopts CONOPS
9 Nov 2007	1 st force generation conference
12 Nov 2007	Council adopts CONOPS
11 Jan 2008	5 th and last force generation conference
14 Jan 2008	Operation Commander presents draft OPLAN
18 Jan 2008	Revised OPLAN released
28 Jan 2008	Council accepts OPLAN and formally launches operation
1-4 Feb 2008	UFDD-led rebel coalition attacks N'Djamena
12 Feb 2008	EUFOR deployment restarts
11 Mar 2008	Status of Forces Agreement signed
15 Mar 2008	EUFOR reaches Initial Operating Capability
17 Sept 2008	EUFOR reaches Full Operating Capability

²⁷ Overview based on data collected through various interviews.

given formal planning authority, and it was subsequently tasked by the PSC to prepare a Crisis Management Concept. In doing so, the Council staff could rely on preliminary work that had been done by the UN. Already in this period, a Joint Planning Group was formed in Paris, drawing on the French national HQ (*Centre de planification et de conduite des operations* or CPCO). It was clear early on that France would offer its OHQ rather than run the operation from within the EU Cell in SHAPE (the military-strategic NATO HQ) or the Operations Centre in Brussels.

In line with the view of the UN, the CMC outlined a multidimensional presence. In the political domain, the EU Special Representative for Sudan, Torben Brylle, would receive additional authority to mediate in the complex regional dynamic. In the humanitarian domain, the Commission would pursue its long-term efforts under the *Programme d'Accompagnement à la Paix*. In the security domain, finally, the EU would undertake its own military effort to provide a security umbrella and financially support the UN's efforts in police training. The embryonic essence of the military mission was laid out. Nevertheless, it would take until 12 September until the Council would accept the CMC.

Inevitably, the debate over the CMC contained tough discussions about the motivations and logic behind the proposed operation. As one diplomat explained, the operation was sold to the national parliaments and the general public as a humanitarian operation - tasked to alleviate the humanitarian spill over from Darfur. In the closed debates, however, three motivating factors reportedly linked up with one another. First, there existed a French desire to do something in Chad. Rather than protecting Déby, this desire sprung from a fear of larger regional destabilisation - regional chaos expanding to Niger or even the Great Lakes region. A French diplomat put it as follows: "What we want in Chad is stability. The rebels aren't any better than Déby, we simply wish to avoid a situation of continuous warfare affecting the broader region." Second was the factor that the PSC had been debating the crisis in Darfur for ages. The frustration of being powerless led to an attempt to try and do at least something about the regional aspect of the crisis. Paradoxically, one diplomat noted, the member states most vocal about Darfur in the past (the UK and Germany, reportedly) were the most reticent about action. Third was the institutional factor. One year onwards from the EUFOR RD Congo mission and with the EU Battlegroups having become fully operational in January 2007, some felt it was time for a new military operation to foster the development of the ESDP as a crisis management tool. In this context the PSC debated a possible deployment of the Nordic Battlegroup into the eastern Congo as well. Chad soon emerged as another candidate, albeit not ideal for a battlegroup scenario.

Overall, several interviews conducted with personnel from various permanent representations in Brussels concur with the analysis that different motivating factors were at play with regard to the Chad operation. There was a certain level of suspicion with regard to the French agenda in the debate. As a result, the neutral countries (led by Austria) insisted on a mandate emphasising the neutrality of the operation. A representative of one of the neutral member states summed it up as follows:

We know the French have certain national interests in Chad and that they are in it with a somewhat different agenda. But without the French nothing would happen at all. By and large, we believe the French are honest about

this and trying to do the right thing. At the European level, the operation was launched for many different reasons of varying importance - there is no single dominant motive.

Nevertheless, the suspicion amongst some member states with regard to the French agenda never disappeared completely. It was felt that however well intentioned the operation, in the end it would serve French interests the most. The argument here was that the Chadian infrastructure (airports, roads, camps etc) would be renovated with EU funds while the EU as such would not remain engaged long-term, leaving France as the main beneficiary of the investment. In this context it should also be noted that the "EU action is appropriate"-decision was never formally taken in the case of EUFOR. Instead, the CMC tasker was retroactively interpreted as such. Depending on one's point of view, this can be read as an example of procedural flexibility or an attempt to push through a decision by stealth.

Following the adoption of the CMC, the PSC gave planning authority to the French OHQ in the fortress of Mont Valerien, nearby Paris, and the EUMC issued a directive to the EUMS for the development of military strategic options. This process, however, had started on an informal basis already from the end of July onwards. While the OHQ had no commander yet, from mid-September national augmentees were sent in to multinationalise the command structure. The MSO directive itself was by and large resource-driven and defined in quantitative terms: the EUMS was asked to propose broad options for an operation involving roughly 1, 2 or 4 battalions. Initially, the EUMS identified two major tasks: (i) to support the UN in training police for the refugee camps and providing aid and (ii) to protect the IDPs and the general population, as it was felt the UN made the refugees their primary

Military Strategic Options EUFOR Tchad/RCA

1. Support Chadian forces in providing security in the area of operations
 - Required capabilities: 1 manoeuvre battalion
 - Problem of impartiality: this minimal option increases dependency on host nation support
2. Putting priority on the protection of MINURCAT (= primary focus) and then the rest
 - Required capabilities: 3 manoeuvre battalions
 - Gradual geographical expansion: Centre → South → North
3. Two lines of operation: (i) supporting the UN deployment and (ii) protecting the civilian population in a wider area
 - Required capabilities: 4 manoeuvre battalions
 - Rapid reaction, all at once deployment
4. Same as MSO 3 but with specific dispositions for the CAR (EUFOR role limited to mentoring)

consideration.²⁸ Eventually, the following set of options was put forward to the EUMC and the PSC, characterised in terms of the effects they would aim to achieve as well as the manner of deployment and the resources required.²⁹

While these options were being developed and discussed, two related events took place. In Brussels, on the one hand, an informal force generation conference was held in parallel to the initiating planning phase. One defence counsellor described the event as “a disaster”: practically no meaningful contributions (apart from the French) were made. In total the offers only added up to about half of the required forces. In New York, on the other hand, the UN Security Council authorised the mandate of both MINURCAT and EUFOR. Acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the UN Security Council defined the mission assigned tasks as follows: for a period of one year from Initial Operating Capability onwards, being authorized to take all necessary measures,

- (i) To contribute to protecting civilians in danger, particularly refugees and displaced persons;
- (ii) To facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and the free movement of humanitarian personnel by helping to improve security in the area of operations;
- (iii) To contribute to protecting United Nations personnel, facilities, installations and equipment and to ensuring the security and freedom of movement of its staff and United Nations and associated personnel,³⁰

An earlier report by the UN Secretary-General had already excluded the possibility that the multidimensional presence would be involved in border control.³¹ One of the preconditions for Déby’s acceptance of EUFOR and MINURCAT was that only Chadian gendarmes would be allowed inside the refugee and IDP camps.³² It nearly goes without saying that in New York the French delegation at the Security Council was closely involved in drafting the resolution. Unsurprisingly, some EU member states more skeptical of the operation felt that a close link existed between Paris and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations in New York.

In the discussion about the options paper, MSO 1 and MSO 4 were soon abandoned. The minimal footprint sketched in MSO 1 would increase the dependency on host nation support to such an extent that neutrality and impartiality would become impossible to guarantee. The monitoring approach offered by MSO 4 was felt to be a non-starter, proposed mainly in order to generate an illusion of choice. This left MSO 2 and MSO 3 which were largely seen as variants of the same idea: option two was more realistic from a political point of view, option three was ideal from a military perspective.³³ Notwithstanding serious doubts over its level of ambition, MSO 3 was adopted. Of course, this debate was not only about what

²⁸ The impression at the EUMS was that the UN initially saw EUFOR as the military arm of their own operation, whereas the Europeans from the start wanted to put their own priorities as well, notably with regard to the IDP problem. As Kiszely (2008, 12) generalises, in multi-organisational campaigns “each line of operation tends to pride itself on its independence”.

²⁹ Information obtained through various interviews.

³⁰ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1778 (2007).

³¹ UN 2007b, 5.

³² Seibert 2007, 17.

³³ Ideal in terms of resources, that is. In terms of logistics, taking into account the limitations of local infrastructure, it is clear that a rapid full deployment would have been highly challenging.

effects the mission should seek, but also about the resources it would require - an aspect that would remain in the spotlight throughout the force generation process. In the run-up to the Joint Action establishing EUFOR, this led to serious disagreements over the reference amount for the common costs of the operation to be split between member states.³⁴ At first, the EUMS suggested an amount of 420 million EUR to the RELEX group. Through negotiations, this amount was reduced to 99,2 million EUR, although it grew again to around 120 million EUR at the start of the operation in January 2008.

On the 15th of October, the Council produced the Joint Action 2007/677/CFSP - the legal act formally establishing the operation. In doing so, Mont Valérien was officially appointed as the EU OHQ, as were LtGen Patrick Nash and BGen Jean-Philippe Ganascia as respectively Operation Commander and Force Commander. In terms of content, EUFOR was labelled as a *military bridging operation*, a concept developed earlier in the context of EU-UN cooperation in crisis management. From the start, the expectation was created that the EU would conduct a mission for one year upon which the UN would take over with a mission of its own - even though no concrete arrangements for doing so were made. In accordance with Resolution 1778, it only stated that an evaluation of the need for a possible follow-up would be held six months after EUFOR achieved Initial Operating Capability. During the following week, the EUMC prepared the Initiating Military Directive, which translated the Joint Action into military guidance. This directive identified that the strategic objective of the operation should be to contribute to a Safe and Secure Environment (SASE). The directive also imposed constraints (obligations) as well as restraints (prohibitions): the force should maintain an impartial and neutral posture and not become involved in the ongoing confrontation between Déby's regime and the various rebel groups. As a result, from 23 October onwards, the military planning process could make a formal start.

3.3 The Military-Strategic Operational Design of EUFOR

3.3.1 The Orientation Phase

By the time the Initiating Military Directive arrived in the Mont Valerien, a lot of effort had already gone into getting the EUFOR OHQ up and running. The OHQ had been pre-activated on September 3rd, received planning authority on Sept 10th and was boosted with augmentees a few days later. The first task was to import all necessary information and expertise in the skeleton HQ structure. For this purpose, all factors having an influence on the operational planning are listed in a so-called Three Column Estimate together with their implications for the operations and corresponding conclusions. This working document, which was already partially ready by September, effectively functioned as the way to familiarise the arriving augmentees with the dossier and formed the basis for mission analysis.

The three mission tasks were defined in the UN Security Council Resolution 1778 mandating EUFOR. The political-strategic objective was to contribute to a SASE. In military terms, this translated into two objectives. On the one hand, EUFOR would provide security to

³⁴ The financial cost of a military ESDP operation is split into *individual costs*, i.e. pertaining to all distinct national contributions to the operation, and *common costs* that relate to the multinational backbone of the operation, such as preparatory missions, headquarters and infrastructure. Individual costs 'lie where they fall', i.e. each contributing state pays for itself, whereas common costs are financed jointly through the ATHENA mechanism, a Gross National Income-based distribution key. (Mattelaer 2007, 82-83).

MINURCAT so that the UN could in turn do its job of training the police to provide security in the refugee camps. On the other hand, EUFOR would foster a sense of security to encourage the return of IDPs. The strategic centre of gravity of EUFOR for drawing strength for achieving these objectives was its *credibility*. In the given context it was a formidable force with firepower (both of its infantry personnel and the availability of close air support), reconnaissance capability (allowing it to see threats from afar) and aerial mobility (allowing it to send reinforcements quickly wherever needed). But apart from military capability and the Rules of Engagement to use it, the credibility was also based on the notion of impartiality. The determination to stay out of the struggle for power would give EUFOR complete independence of action - on the ground in Chad, it would not require anyone's authorization to act. This in turn required adequate resources, deployment and sustainment in a distant and inhospitable theatre. As a result of these requirements, the vulnerability of EUFOR lay both in the political process in Brussels and in the logistical sustainment challenge in theatre.

Already in the orientation phase, however, the planners had to tackle the two major constraints imposed by the political-strategic level. On the one hand, the operation had to be neutral and impartial - terminology used by policymakers without being clearly defined. Although semantically related, military personnel do not see these terms as synonyms. Neutrality is interpreted as not affecting the political situation at all, while impartiality is interpreted as applying your influence in an even-handed manner. In this context, impartiality means reacting to threats to civilians or the UN no matter where the threat comes from whereas neutrality would mean not to interfere at all. In any case the politico-strategic constraints meant that no clear-cut adversary was available. On the other hand, the political level had identified an end-date (the operation will last 12 months from Initial Operating Capability onwards) rather than an end-state (the operation should achieve objectives x,y and z). As the operational planning process is originally developed for high-intensity combat operations, these constraints together with the tasks identified in the UN mandate and the nature of the conflict context itself brought the planners into uncharted waters. The terminology of operational planning, correspondingly, had to be stretched to its semantic limits.

For structuring the Opposing Forces (Opposing forces) situation, the planners made recourse to the concept of *spoilers*.³⁵ The phrase was originally coined by the scholar Stephen Stedman and refers to

leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it.³⁶

In the context of Chad and the CAR, all armed groups who could pose a military threat to SASE were labelled as spoilers. This included rebels, militias, bandits as well as government forces (for example in the hypothetical case of escalation of the proxy war between Chad and Sudan into a conventional conflict). One can differentiate between these actors in terms of their aims and motives and correspondingly lump them together into three

³⁵ On a methodological level, it should be noted that the terminology of 'opposing forces' for this very reason is being abandoned in favour of 'relevant forces' or 'parties in conflict'. This underlines the point that the complexity of operational planning increases dramatically with the vagueness of the mission.

³⁶ Stedman 1997, 5.

categories: (i) the Chadian rebels with the aim of overthrowing Déby, (ii) armed militias of tribal nature and (iii) CAR rebels and bandits of Sudanese origin. What these three categories have in common is that they oppose the establishment of a SASE on the basis that an environment riddled with criminality and impunity suits their activities. In this sense, the use of the spoiler concept allowed an application of the ‘own forces’ vs ‘opposing forces’ framework, even when there was no adversary on the political level: opposing forces are all potential threats to the UN and the civilian population. Of course, as the spoiler concept functions as a catch-all formula, this complicates Opposing forces centre of gravity analysis.³⁷ Tactically, all groups could be analysed individually, but on the strategic level their centre of gravity remained a vacuum. On the operational level, one can go no further than saying that all spoilers derive their strength from the general impunity to conduct criminal activities. This leads to near infinite sustainment capability, but with vulnerable lines of communication. For this reason, strategic planners felt it was best to concentrate on their own centre of gravity.

The absence of a clearly defined end-state constituted a second major problem. EUFOR was tasked to maintain a condition (contribute to SASE) for a pre-specified duration of 12 months rather than achieve a clearly defined outcome. In terms of operational design, Lines of Operation could not converge towards an end-state or the defeat of an opposing forces centre of gravity.³⁸ As a result, EUFOR lines of operation ran parallel. The following four lines of operation were identified, with corresponding ‘decisive points’ (which were reportedly rather fuzzy than decisive).

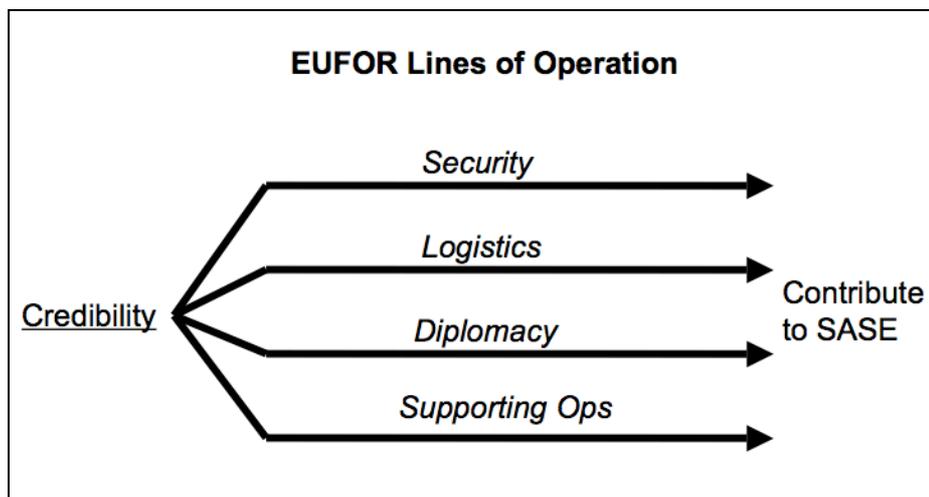


Figure 5. The four lines of operation

In terms of security, EUFOR would deter the use of force against the UN presence, refugees, IDPs and the civilian population. In terms of logistics, it would sustain itself and guarantee its freedom of movement, improve transport infrastructure and contribute to the free movement of MINURCAT. Regarding diplomacy, it would open up lines of communication to all actors and support mediation efforts wherever possible. The notion of

³⁷ Centre of gravity analysis is a military methodology for analysing strengths and weaknesses of all conflict parties (cf. Eikmeier 2004).

³⁸ In operation design, decisive points are those from which a centre of gravity can be threatened. These are linked together into lines of operation that represent the conceptual path connecting an actor's centre of gravity and objectives.

supporting operations can perhaps best be understood as perception management: through information operations (communicating), PSYOPS (influencing), CIMIC activities and an extensive liaison network it would maximally foster a *sense of security*. Improving the security situation was felt to be as much a matter of perception as well as of the number of security incidents. In any event, the security situation would be hard to measure in quantitative terms. For example, there were no statistics available about the security situation prior to EUFOR deployment. Even if there had been, one planner remarked, the number of reported incidents might very well have risen because the presence of EUFOR meant that now there was at least always someone to report to.

Fast-forwarding to the plan review phase halfway into the operation, the operational design picture could be complemented by the prospect of a follow-up force under UN flag. This would be realised by expanding MINURCAT with a military component post 15 March 2009.³⁹ This follow-up force would at least initially rely on European troop contributions and benefit from a separate planning cell in New York (not unlike the planning arrangements for UNIFIL II). At the time of writing, it seemed likely the EUFOR contributions from Ireland, France and possibly others would continue to operate under the auspices of the expanded MINURCAT operation. In theory, such a UN force would be able to adopt a more long-term perspective than EUFOR. In the view of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, a 10 to 15 year timeframe would be required to make progress towards achieving a self-sustaining SASE. Over this time horizon, rather than the twelve months of EUFOR, it would be possible to have converging lines of operation.

2.3.2 Concept Development

From the operational design it was reasonably clear *what role* EUFOR saw itself playing: the main effect to be achieved was to make the local population feel to be more secure. The next question was *how to do this* in practice. In very broad terms, this question was already part of the MSO debate. MSO 2 foresaw a gradual build-up of the EUFOR presence throughout the area of operations: arrive in the centre (Abéché), then expand south and finally north. At the same time it would functionally expand from a monitoring presence to a more robust peacekeeping role. MSO 3 aimed for an accelerated, rapid build-up in all three zones simultaneously, producing a shock effect affecting the mindset of all players.

It was clear from the outset, however, that the discussion about deployment timeframes would be heavily affected by logistical considerations. The logistical challenges for EUFOR have been described in detail elsewhere.⁴⁰ The area of operations is located 2,000 km from the nearest seaport and 4,450 km from Brussels. Airport facilities in Chad are very limited in their throughput capacity while strategic airlift is very expensive and inadequate for large cargos. As Host Nation Support in the area of operations is nearly non-existent and reliance on local resources (e.g. water) would be highly counter-productive, EUFOR would need to autonomously lift in everything it would need. As a result, EUFOR could not escape from long transit times (35-45 days): 12-20 days sealift from Europe to Cameroun, 10-15 days road transport through the Douala corridor to N'Djamena plus an additional 5-10 days by road to Abéché. The deployment that was realized (build-up to Initial Operating Capability in about five weeks) was deemed to be close to the maximum possible. Therefore, all planning considerations were severely constrained by geography and

³⁹ The planning process of the expanded MINURCAT operation falls outside the scope of this discussion. See UN 2008b for more information.

⁴⁰ Seibert 2007.

logistics. One could vary the weight of the different building blocks of the force and move them around a bit, but there were no radically different courses of action available due to logistical constraints.

The idea of varying the thrust of the deployment contained in the MSO discussion was also reflected in the debate about possible courses of action. On the one hand there was the *idea of synergy*, which was based on the simultaneity of deployment and maximal co-location between EUFOR and MINURCAT. On the other hand there was the *idea of situational focus*: to concentrate the central effort in the Goz Beida area, as it is the main passageway for armed groups, and to have a Quick Reaction Force in Abéché ready to intervene elsewhere as a sort of mobile fire-brigade whenever required. Eventually a mix of these two approaches was used. The area of operations was divided into three zones, North, Centre and South.⁴¹ In order to achieve co-location with MINURCAT, EUFOR bases would be deployed to Abéché as Force Headquarters and six forward locations: Bahia, Iriba and Guéréda in the north, Forchana and Goz Beida in the centre and Birao in the south. Nevertheless, the idea remained that the central effort was to lie around Goz Beida.

The reasons behind this choice were twofold. On the one hand it was related to geography: the north being more mountainous and the south having more state boundaries (in this context functioning as hideouts) in its vicinity makes the Goz Beida area the most attractive passageway for the movement of armed groups. On the other hand the focus on Goz Beida was related to the migration problem at hand. The main bulk of camps with refugees from Darfur is located in the north. This refugee problem would require a long-term solution to the war in Darfur. The war in Darfur is a variable EUFOR could not influence. As a consequence, the residual task in the north was limited to deterring attacks on the UN and the refugee camps. Towards the south, however, one finds mostly camps for internally displaced persons. From EUFOR's perspective, this constituted a more fluid situation. As it is an indigenous problem, it was felt to be an issue EUFOR would have more influence over. As there is at least the possibility of increasing confidence amongst the IDP, it offers the most potential for change and hence the best prospects for success.

As a result, the six forward bases would have slightly diverging roles. The northern area (Bahia, Iriba, Guéréda) with the main refugee presence would require a permanent deterring EUFOR presence for security operations.⁴² This can best be understood as police action with very potent rules of engagement. Towards the centre (Forchana and especially Goz Beida) the mixed refugee and IDP situation would require a more robust security presence. This required more focussed engagement: the same deterrence-based modus operandi but more concentrated and specific. The presence in the CAR, an area mostly plagued by banditry and movements of armed groups, again required deterrence of a mobile, intelligence-driven nature.

These varying deterrence postures are based on being seen and on showing what the force is capable of. 'Being seen' is achieved through vigorous patrolling. Such patrols can be both short-range (several hours) and long-range (several days). Especially the random pattern of

⁴¹ LtGen Patrick Nash Press Conference.

⁴² In practice, the presence in the north would be built around Iriba rather than three separate bases.

night patrols was deemed to have significant deterrent effect on large-scale criminality.⁴³ ‘Showing what the force is capable of’ is done through precision-targeted combined joint operations. These can be of demonstrative nature in order to increase visibility but can also constitute intelligence driven interventions against specific threats or potential incidents. These operations would take place in the Forchana and Goz Beida area. They involve up to 250 personnel from several member states (hence combined or multinational). They would also be joint (i.e. inter-services) in involving an air component of 7 to 9 helicopters and a ground component of 70 to 80 vehicles.

Of course, the instruments commanders have at their disposal for achieving their mission are intimately bound up with the dimensioning of the entire operation. Together with the CONOPS, the Operation Commander prepares a Statement of Requirements. In this process a troop-to-task analysis has to be completed: determining what the force needs to do and what type and size of force are required to do so. While troop-to-task analysis at the tactical level is a fairly straightforward process, it is very difficult at the strategic level. On the one hand, the tasks are described in more general terms and allow for more room for interpretation. On the other hand, there is little established doctrine available in this domain. Some general force sizing criteria (such as the number of security personnel relative to population size) have merit but easily generate very large forces.⁴⁴ The experience of actual crisis response operations shows that such parameters often yield impossible requirements.

EUFOR planners did not resort to force sizing parameters based on demography and geographical size. Instead, the Statement of Requirement was based on the force ratio vis-à-vis potential opposing forces. The general idea was that a contingent in any isolated site should not be inferior to a company. The reasoning was that a smaller force would not have the critical mass to guarantee its freedom of manoeuvre. Of course it would be possible that EUFOR contingents could come under threat from armed groups that are numerically far superior. With reconnaissance support, however, it was deemed that such threats could be detected beforehand. The contingents, which would in any event have an important technological advantage, could then be reinforced by the Quick Reaction Force in Abéché and could call in close air support as a last resort option. The Statement of Requirement was thus build on the idea that all bases required at the minimum one company and the Goz Beida camp two companies. This leads to a total Statement of Requirement of 10 companies: 2 in Goz Beida, 5 in total for the other forward bases, 1 as Quick Reaction Force in the FHQ in Abéché and another 2 companies spread out over all camps for force protection purposes. This provisional Statement of Requirement of ten companies (equivalent to just over three battalions) was well in line with the discussion over the MSOs. Apart from the companies, however, the force would require important enablers such as tactical transport capability for increased mobility and reconnaissance assets.

3.4 Force Generation and EUFOR Capabilities

While the essence of operational design and military strategy is about how to achieve the desired effects, an important preliminary requirement is to obtain the means required to be able to do so. In the current security environment, this is by no means self-evident. This

⁴³ During the actual operation, for example, a night patrol encountered an ambush site at which a clash ensued between EUFOR troops and an unidentified armed group. This event was judged to send an important signal that armed robbery is no longer a risk-free enterprise.

⁴⁴ Quinlivan 1995.

can be explained at the national level by budgetary constraints or an unwillingness to assume risk (these two factors add up to political will) and military overstretch (the practical availability of capabilities may be blocked by other engagements). It is the Operation Commander who needs to define what he needs and to ask the political authorities of all participating states to provide him with the proper means. This negotiation process over resources, which runs independently from the operational planning itself, is called force generation. It tends to be a highly politicised process where the result is invariably a compromise between military needs and political acceptability.⁴⁵

On 8 October the PSC adopted the CONOPS prepared by the Operation Commander. This (strategic level) CONOPS was accompanied by a provisional Statement of Requirement. The following day, the first formal force generation conference was held. In total, five formal force generation conferences (preceded by an informal indicative one) would be needed before EUFOR could be launched. This lengthy force generation process is one of the main elements in explaining why the operation was up and running only a full ten months after the operation had been first suggested. One interviewee described the force generation process as “a game of poker”. In the minds of several delegations there seemed to exist an expectation that France would by default provide the essential means for making the operation a reality. It was France, after all, that had proposed the operation in the first place. Furthermore, France lobbied intensively for it, even though the other major ESDP players - the UK and Germany - had immediately indicated they would not participate (apart from staff in the OHQ) because of their engagements in Afghanistan. As a result, the other member states had only a limited incentive to make sizeable contributions as they expected the French to assume most of the burden anyway. Yet this proved to be a misperception: the French were well aware that this would become the third military ESDP operation in Africa and it was again going to be dominated by French personnel. Both in terms of making the ESDP sustainable as a European project as well as averting criticisms of neo-colonialism and national interests, French dominance in the mission was seen as undesirable. At the fifth and last force generation, France grudgingly provided the essential assets to be able to start the mission. Nevertheless, the mission was launched without the strategic reserve being covered for and with shortfalls in reconnaissance capability.⁴⁶

Initially, 14 member states pledged ground contributions and 22 sent staff contributions to the OHQ in Mont Valérien. Eventually, 23 EU member states plus Albania and Croatia at some point had personnel in theatre. The major contributions of land forces came from France, Ireland and Poland. They took the lead over the multinational battalions, based in Forchana, Goz Beida and Iriba, respectively. A French-led Logistics Battalion was based in Abéché together with the Special Operation Forces component. The special forces would constitute the initial entry force and subsequently provide special reconnaissance and surveillance as well as a rapid reaction capability for emergencies.⁴⁷ In terms of air assets for reconnaissance and close air support, France provided the fixed wing capacity through double-hatting Mirages and unmanned aerial vehicles from its Epervier contingent based in N'Djamena. A multinational helicopter pool was established with French, Polish and Irish

⁴⁵ Kiszely 2008, 8.

⁴⁶ Unofficially, the absence of a strategic reserve did not cause a major worry as planners considered it “inconceivable” that the French Epervier contingent would not come to the aid of EUFOR if a dire situation would occur.

⁴⁷ Note that Belgium took command of the special forces component of the operation from 15 October 2008 to 15 March 2009.

contributions and an offer from Russia (4).⁴⁸ These helicopters were crucial for tactical airlift, but also for medical evacuation and close fire support, functioning as an important force multiplier by providing greater mobility and operational flexibility.

Another word is in place about the MSOs. The chosen option (MSO 3) initially foresaw four battalions. As discussed above, the provisional Statement of Requirement prepared by the OHQ was calculated in terms of companies rather than battalions. The OHQ demanded for ten companies of which it eventually got nine. This force would be deployed in a sequential build-up from the initial entry force in the centre, first towards the south (Goz Beida) and then towards the north (Iriba). Although the OHQ did not lower its level of ambition in the face of a difficult force generation, the eventual outcome did resemble MSO 2 more than MSO 3. While there was pressure to start the deployment sooner rather than later so as to allow for a full build-up before the rain season, the launch had to be delayed until the mission essential requirements were fulfilled. This put a burden on the Operation Commander not to take rash decisions, yet not to be overly dogmatic either. Planners seem to agree, however, on the thesis that the overall force volume was relatively coherent with the mission and that the launch was not forced by political pressure. Thus, after the fulfilment of mission critical requirements and the approval of the OPLAN, the Council could formally launch the operation on 28 January 2008.

⁴⁸ Pour la petite histoire, it is interesting to observe that the offer of Russian helicopters was already announced in the March 2008 but never made concrete. The technical agreement drawn up by Russia was only presented mid August 2008, i.e. about one week after the war in Georgia. While it was somewhat embarrassing that the EU was discussing sending monitors to Georgia to verify the withdrawal of Russian forces there and simultaneously received an offer for Russian help in Chad, it was decided early September that the Russia offer would be accepted in order to increase operational effectiveness.

4 EUFOR STRATEGY ANALYSIS: HUMANITARIAN DETERRENCE

The formal tasks set out in EUFOR's mandate - contributing to the protection of refugees and IDPs, facilitating humanitarian aid and protecting the UN presence - give the operation a military-humanitarian character. It amounts to military action not with the intention of defeating an adversary, but to provide greater security and enable humanitarian work. From a planning perspective, the crucial question is how these tasks should be completed. The short answer is that the key strategic objective of EUFOR was to contribute to a SASE. This would be achieved tactically by vigorous patrolling, an extensive information campaign, liaising with all parties on the ground and continuous intelligence work. This section discusses in detail how the link between the strategic objective and the action on the ground is supposed to function. In other words: how would it for EUFOR be possible to generate the intended effects?

First, a remark is on the nature of the conflict context is due. Considering the imposed neutrality and impartiality contained in the UN mandate as well as the CMC and subsequent planning documents, it should be clear EUFOR was not intended to engage in any open conflict with a distinct adversary. It would be more appropriate to say EUFOR would deploy in a context of ongoing confrontation between the regime in N'Djamena, various rebel groups with a political agenda, and other armed groups that can be labelled as bandits. EUFOR's principal role was to inject a modicum of stability in order to alleviate the humanitarian situation. This meant that EUFOR was to position itself as an independent actor in the ongoing confrontation. It would not search open conflict, yet it would attempt to prevent the occurrence of more violence affecting the humanitarian situation. In other words, it would attempt to influence the intentions of other armed actors so that they would not resort to the use of force. *Deterrence* can be understood to be the key concept underlying the strategy of this operation.

The concept of deterrence embodies the idea that the presence of a military threat discourages potential adversaries from undertaking any unwanted action out of fear for retaliation.⁴⁹ It is the threat of military force that changes the cost-benefit calculations of possible opponents. It qualifies as a massive psychological operation. The opponents can be states as well as non-state actors, or even a population in general. Deterrence is equally a conceptual part of any penal and law enforcement system: you should not break the law or otherwise you are punished. Deterrence often plays a major role in military crisis management. Apart from the (deterrence-based) policing role intervention forces sometimes fulfil, it remains a widespread idea that external military forces by their mere presence constitute a stabilising factor in a conflict environment. Yet deterrence does not come automatically from the presence of a stick. It assumes that the opponents are rational actors with cost-benefit calculations that can be changed. In order to do so, the actor who wishes to deter something must clearly define what action would not be acceptable. He must communicate his intentions about action and reaction. Furthermore, the deterring actor needs to be credible: materially, he needs to possess the means to react, and psychologically he needs to show the resolve to retaliate.

⁴⁹ Deterrence as a concept was originally theorised in depth by Schelling 1960.

It is not entirely straightforward to define in what sense this is a deterrence-based operation. This is partly due to the semantic confusion between nuclear and conventional deterrence - nuclear deterrence being far better known - and partly due to the inherent fuzziness of the political context: there is no clear adversary to deter. At the level of political deliberations, the concept received little prominence, if mentioned at all. On a more technical level, however, the situation was quite different. In the subsequent reports of the UN Secretary-General on the military component of the multidimensional presence in Chad, the following is a recurring phrase:

The military component would assist in protecting civilians at risk, facilitate delivery of humanitarian relief, and seek through its presence to reduce tension and deter conflict, with a view to establishing a more secure environment in its area of deployment.⁵⁰

Senior EU military officials extensively used the same discourse. The Chairman of the EUMC stated “we cannot underestimate the deterrent effect of the deployment of a very robust European force”.⁵¹ In this sense, the use of a deterrence strategy was predetermined from the start rather than a choice on the side of the Commanders. As a result, Force Commander Ganascia could make the point very clear in public:

Mon mandat est très clair. A partir du moment où ces personnes [des soldats dévoyés, des rebelles ou des bandits] exercent une menace militaire sur la population, attaquent les ONG, la Minurcat ou mes hommes, je dois agir. Tant qu'ils passent leur chemin, je ne suis pas concerné.⁵²

Statements like these fit the deterrence concept perfectly in the sense that they clearly set the threshold of what is not acceptable and when action will be taken. Next is the issue of credibility: having the means and resolve to retaliate. It is in this light that we can best interpret EUFOR's self-identified strategic centre of gravity. It is remarkable that EUFOR, which operates with the consent of the host nations and with humanitarian tasks, was provided by the UN Security Council with a Chapter VII mandate and correspondingly robust rules of engagement.⁵³ Together with the mandate, EUFOR has at its disposal what one interviewee labelled “an absolute overkill in firepower”. In this reasoning, the firepower of EUFOR's modern weapon systems functions as a guarantee that the situation will not escalate into violence - simply because it is clear who would win the battle. The events on the ground seem to demonstrate the effectiveness of the threat. On one particular occasion, for example, an EUFOR patrol cornered an armed group that had stolen humanitarian aid supplies. Rather than risking confrontation, the goods were returned by the robbers with complimentary apologies.

On the ground, the deterrence relies on the simple presence of EUFOR, the frequent conduct of patrols and targeted joint operations. On a conceptual level, the deterrence

⁵⁰ UN 2007a, § 58 - copied in UN 2007b, § 46

⁵¹ Gen Henri Bentégeat Press Briefing.

⁵² Quoted in Gros-Verheyde 2008.

⁵³ In UN peacekeeping jargon, traditional peacekeeping (in the sense of interposition between conflict parties after a ceasefire and / or peace agreement was concluded) is mandated under Chapter VI of the UN Charter, whereas peace enforcement (coercive action with a view to maintain or restore international peace and security) is mandated under Chapter VII. The term ‘robust peacekeeping’ is used for the grey area in between where the use of force is authorised on the tactical level to deal with spoilers. (UN 2008a). In the case of EUFOR, the combination of mandate and capabilities can be interpreted as going beyond the requirements of the ‘robust peacekeeping’ category.

follows from the presence of EUFOR rather than its mandate. The deterrence is not the mission of EUFOR, it is the strategic tool to achieve the objectives of the operation, which are all linked to a humanitarian purpose. In this sense, the overall military strategy - in a Clausewitzian sense of the word - could be labelled as *humanitarian deterrence: the use of a military threat to discourage spoilers from engaging in action that undermines the security of the unarmed population*. Armed groups can fight amongst each other, rebels can mount a raid on the presidential palace and government forces can hunt the rebels down - on the condition that the civilian population, the refugees and the UN are kept out of the fight and are not robbed and preyed upon as a means to sustain operations.

The independence of action that EUFOR enjoys empowers it with a degree of influence over all conflict parties. The rebels are hindered in their freedom of manoeuvre and in some respects have to alter their behaviour so as to avoid confrontation. The activities of large-scale bandit groups are disrupted, at least to some extent. Finally, EUFOR also has an influence on the governments in the region because EUFOR is present as a witness. Regular armed forces can no longer cross the Chadian-Sudanese border without being seen and caught on camera. This is deemed to have some deterrent effect in the proxy war with regard to provocations along the border. In this sense EUFOR plays a minor role in influencing the regional balance of power. As soon as it is present on the ground, it cannot avoid having an influence of its own (and hence not being neutral in the strictest sense of the word). Nonetheless, it can attempt to apply this influence even-handedly (impartially) - i.e. according to the interests of the civilian population.

One can thus observe two paradoxes in the strategy. On the one hand, this strategy - which is designed to enable police work and humanitarian aid - relies on very robust military force. EUFOR can maintain the independence that is necessary for doing its job only by being the strongest kid on the playground. Whether this induces the other players to reach towards a political settlement is another question. On the other hand, any military operation will wield some influence of a more political nature, although it can be hard to predict which. While one can do no more than speculate about the ultimate rationale of the operation in the minds of key policymakers in European capitals, one could argue that an operation with a mandate containing humanitarian tasks will always have a political spill over effect from its simple presence. Along this line of thought, even a humanitarian aid operation would contribute to some level of containment of the political grievances in the region. The possible effect of EUFOR on the politics of the multiple conflicts in the region, however, would be hard to predict accurately beforehand. In terms of intentionality, it seems clear EUFOR's immediate objectives were limited to deterring bandits, enabling MINURCAT and endowing the ESDP with more operational experience.

5 THE OMNIPRESENCE OF FRICTION

The godfather of military theory, the Prussian general Carl von Clausewitz, introduced the concept of friction, which he defined as the cluster of factors that distinguish real war from war on paper. Along this line of thought, Helmuth von Moltke the Elder famously stated that no plan ever survives the first contact with the enemy. Friction is a fundamental characteristic of strategy, and as such mitigates and limits the rationality involved in the strategy-making process. It can manifest itself as fundamental uncertainty or the role of chance. Yet it can equally be part of the intergovernmental bargaining process or organisational procedures. While crisis response operations like EUFOR may be different from war-fighting in many respects, they are certainly not less complex. The large number of actors present in theatre - EUFOR had to operate alongside the UN and deal with governments, rebel factions and NGOs alike - already guarantees as much. This section gives an overview of a number of domains in which friction was at play in the strategic planning of EUFOR.

5.1 Planning Assumptions

In the planning process - at all levels - it is often necessary to make planning assumptions: elements you do not know or over which you have no control, but without which you cannot plan. Lower levels of planning will generally treat these assumptions as facts. When such an assumption turns out to be incorrect, this may have profound implications for the plan in general.

One of the key assumptions made by EUFOR - already on the political level - was that it would deploy alongside MINURCAT. This meant there would be a distribution of labour in the sense that EUFOR would deter military threats whereas MINURCAT would train police for dealing with criminality. This assumption turned out to be substantially flawed. MINURCAT was much slower in getting on the ground than EUFOR, which delayed the training and deployment of the Chadian police. In September 2008, only 300 Chadian police officers had been trained and none were deployed on the ground.⁵⁴ In the process of preparing the deployment of EUFOR, however, this was not yet known. It was only once EUFOR arrived that it could observe that the police presence was not following on simultaneously. As changing EUFOR's role in theatre would have required reopening the political process and as logistical and geographical constraints did not allow for much flexibility, the room for conceptual manoeuvre available to EUFOR was limited. This explains to a large extent why EUFOR is often qualified in the press as having little effect: it may have enabled an environment where police training could be done, but that in itself does not generate the security that the population and humanitarian community was craving for.

5.2 Interpreting Objectives: What is a SASE?

Amongst military personnel, the phrase 'Safe and Secure Environment' is commonly seen as the fuzziest mission one can receive. The concept can be understood to be so wide as to be

⁵⁴ Oxfam 2008, 15.

applicable to every conceivable contemporary operation. As one senior military officer explained:

What does SASE mean? It presupposes the rule of law, relying on police, judiciary and border control mechanisms. It presupposes economical perspectives to make it sustainable. In essence, it presupposes a functioning state. But which of these elements can be achieved militarily?

From a military perspective, a SASE can perhaps best be interpreted as the absence of military forces engaging in open conflict. This qualifies as the most basic precondition for all other aspects, but only a precondition. However, how to put this into practice brings us back to the complexity of conducting a troop-to-task analysis.

As stated in its UN mandate, EUFOR was asked 'to contribute to the protection of ...'. Although one could remark that even the most minimal effort would already qualify, the relevant question here is what effort qualifies as a politically meaningful contribution. While EUFOR by most standards would qualify as an operation capable of making a significant difference, it remains self-evident that expectations on this matter will diverge and that the semantic difference between 'contribute to a SASE' and 'ensure a SASE' will be lost on a local population living in desperate conditions.

5.3 The End-State vs End-Date Debate

The planning of military operations is traditionally geared towards the achievement of an end-state, i.e. obtaining the situation upon which an operation can be terminated successfully. Planners expect this end-state to be defined prior to the operation itself: the idea is that you should know where you want to go before you set out, not simply follow your own nose. In traditional combat operations, this end-state tends to be the political counterpart to the military defeat the opponent's centre of gravity. In this conceptual framework, the entire operational design is built upon lines of operation converging towards the centre of gravity and the end-state. In the EUFOR operational design, this analytical grid was not applicable. Rather than having an end-state, an end-date was defined. Consequently, the operational design consisted of parallel lines of operation that ended in mid-air. The political-strategic logic was built on the (at least initially) uncertain assumption that there would be a UN follow-on force with a much longer time horizon.

The end-date concept has already received ample criticism. It was also applied in the context of the EUFOR RD Congo operation in 2006, which was limited to a duration of four months. In the lessons-learned process following this operation, it was already concluded that this was highly inadvisable. This begs the question why the EU does it again, thereby dismissing its own recommendations. An answer to this question can be found when considering the nature of the operations European armed forces currently undertake. These operations tend to be timeless: they are seeking a condition that must be maintained until a definitive political solution is found.⁵⁵ This tends to be a process over which intervention forces have little control and which may take decades - or not come at all. In the former Yugoslavia, European forces have been engaged since 1992. In Lebanon, UN peacekeepers have been active since 1978. Peacekeeping history abounds with examples of operations that go on for years and years without any final agreement coming closer. From the

⁵⁵ Smith 2005.

perspective of the EU, it may well be attractive to provide only an initial entry force - with the corresponding fanfare - and subsequently hand over the operation to the UN. This can be a cheaper long-term solution, albeit at the risk of overburdening a UN peacekeeping system that is already under systemic stress.

It is worthwhile pondering what the difference between an end-state and an end-date means for the making of military strategy. When there is a clear traditional objective to be achieved - in the sense of 'defeat' or 'occupy' - this does not matter very much apart from adding time-constraints. When the objective is to maintain a SASE so as to allow for other action - be it police training or a political process - the implications are more profound. This objective can be sought through humanitarian deterrence as described above or through the simple physical defence of every single element in need of protection. In reality, it will always be a mix of the two, but it should be clear that the deterrence posture is more cost-effective than sending a military component along with every single police patrol. A strategy of deterrence, however, does not sit comfortably with the idea of an end-date. If it is known in advance that the military threat will be removed at a specific point in time, the strategic logic crumbles. A spoiler may simply choose to postpone his action until the military threat is withdrawn. In the case of EUFOR RD Congo, for example, the very scenario that the operation was intended to prevent - the contenders in the presidential elections resorting to the use of force - materialised with a couple of months of delay, after EUFOR RD Congo had left the country. Similarly, the military security that EUFOR Tchad / RCA provides through deterrence is unlikely to endure if there is a security vacuum after 15 March 2009. In order to be effective, therefore, any UN follow-on force should be equally credible as a deterrent. This means political credibility as an independent actor as well as military credibility in terms of having the required intelligence, mobility and firepower.

5.4 Credibility as a Security Actor: Synchronising Operational Planning and Force Generation

The issue of credibility is also a matter of political debate in the European context. As a strategic centre of gravity, credibility is a remarkably precious asset in what it allows an actor to do - it amounts to the idea that threats and promises will generate nearly the same effect as the use of force. Nevertheless, it is at the same time a vulnerable asset in the sense that it is difficult to build-up but easy to lose. It would be fair to say that the military-strategic credibility of EUFOR in the conflict theatre was beyond reasonable doubt. Although the force that was generated was small in numbers, all potential opposing forces were no match in terms of firepower and technological sophistication. In terms of local politics, the course of events so far seems to bear out that EUFOR can indeed follow an independent and impartial course. It did not intervene on behalf of Chadian government forces when they clashed with rebels. It did intervene when an unidentified armed group threatened an IDP camp near Goz Beida, leading to Irish EUFOR forces opening fire. One interviewee summed it up as follows: "Déby now accuses us of favouring the rebels while the rebels accuse us of protecting Déby. So I think we are doing well in establishing ourselves as impartial." One could of course say that a SASE tends to benefit those in power more than the armed opposition, but within the military logic of the operation this was an unintentional consequence rather than a conscious intent. As a result, both the political and military credibility of EUFOR, once it was deployed, seems reasonably assured. However, *reaching* that point that was more problematic.

While the credibility of EUFOR as an actor in Chad and the CAR seems sufficient, the political-strategic debate and the force generation seems to be the Achilles heel of the credibility of the ESDP as a vehicle for military crisis-management. To some extent, the long-winded debate about the initiation phase can be said to be natural to intergovernmental policy-making. The lengthy force generation, however, confirms that the political will behind the operation was wobbly at best. If it takes six force generation conferences to obtain sufficient contributions for a relatively small force, there seems to be a lack of common interest among the member states. This is quite understandable considering the other ongoing military commitments of member states (notably Afghanistan) and the diverging geopolitical priorities (Russia causing more worries to policy-makers in eastern Europe than humanitarian disasters in Africa). Nevertheless, a case can be made that a lack of political will should become clear from early on in the planning process so as not to generate unrealistic expectations.⁵⁶ Moreover, it should be noted that this does not apply only to the EU: both NATO and the UN suffer from the same problem.

At the fundamental level, this lack of determination and political priority can be explained as follows. Military operations emerging primarily from humanitarian considerations qualify as operations of choice rather than necessity.⁵⁷ While the conflict in Chad may affect the interests of some European member states, there is no direct threat to the primary interests of any of these states, let alone the EU in its entirety. As a result, while few policy-makers (or their democratic constituents) will oppose such operations as a matter of principle, it is unlikely that these operations will be pursued with great determination. In this sense, these operations are more like diplomatic levers in which militaries can gather valuable experience as well as make themselves useful in peacetime rather than the ultimate *raison d'être* of the military, which still is to ensure the survival of the society from which it springs. This is not to say such operations are not worthwhile or that they should be treated as mere exercises - they are often as dangerous and difficult as any. The fact that they do not spring from the unambiguous core interests of a state, however, means that it is far more difficult to generate sufficient political will to bear their cost, in particular actual casualties.

In practical terms, it can be concluded that the current arrangement - where operational planning and force generation are concurrent but separate processes - is probably not the best answer to flexible planning requirements. The EUFOR CMC was written without recourse to an official indication of available resources. At the indicative force generation conference, very few commitments were made. Nevertheless, planning went ahead. The full OPLAN was nearly ready at a time when it was not clear whether the mission critical capability requirements could be fulfilled. In other words, the implicit assumption was that France would provide the required resources at all costs - and this was a dubious assumption to make if one aimed to have a sound planning methodology in place. In order not to be planning in a vacuum, it is critical to have the operational planning and force generation processes work in tandem. Yet the making of military strategy should not be simply resource-driven either. The discussions about how to achieve the objectives and about how to generate the right task force cannot be conducted in two separate rooms. According to several interviewees, the political-strategic debate in Brussels was not so

⁵⁶ Cf. Giegerich 2008 for an extensive discussion about the gap between ambition and reality in the ESDP.

⁵⁷ Paraphrasing the opposition between 'wars of necessity' and 'wars of choice' developed by Freedman 1998.

much about what the operation should achieve as about what it could cost. In such an atmosphere, political credibility as a multilateral security actor becomes hard to come by.

5.5 Activating a Multinational Command and Control Structure

The EU has three possible command and control options for planning and conducting military operations: the EU Cell in SHAPE and the corresponding NATO command structure, the Operations Centre in the EUMS and one of the five identified national headquarters (of which only three are considered truly operational). As with the previous military operations in Africa, the last option was chosen. The French OHQ of Mont Valerien was activated and multinationalised by augmentees from all participating member states. Although the debate concerning EU command and control arrangements is highly politicised, a number of factual observations can be made on the operational level.

First, feeding all relevant information into an otherwise inactive HQ is a time-consuming process for which adequate protocol is often absent. In the case of EUFOR, most of the practical information required for planning was present inside the French *Centre de planification et de conduite des opérations*, but it could not automatically be shared with the EU OHQ. Furthermore, the simple process of familiarising all augmentees with the operation and learning to work together requires time as well. In the estimate of one interviewee, getting a skeleton HQ up to work at full power takes about three months. The timely production of the key planning documents (CONOPS and OPLAN) is therefore critically dependent on an early activation of the HQ.

Second, the activated OHQ is only a strategic-level HQ, not a complete command structure with adequate communications and information systems (CIS). In order to create a complete communication network, France inserted CIS teams in every EUFOR contingent. In other words, at the tactical level all contingents internally relied on their national communication systems, but in order to allow communications with the FHQ and higher up the chain of command, French equipment was inserted at each critical node. In terms of communication, therefore, it could be argued the heart of EUFOR lay in the French CPCO rather than in the EU OHQ of Mont Valerien. At one point, a proposal was made to move the CIS component completely out of Mont Valerien. As this would effectively dismember the OHQ structure, the proposal was turned down. It does show, however, that there existed a certain level of operational dissatisfaction with the present arrangements.

Third is the issue of continuity. In the planning arrangements used for EUFOR, the initial military planning in order to inform the political-strategic process was done at the Council Secretariat and the EUMS. From September onwards, planning authority moved to Mont Valerien. While efforts were made to get liaison officers from the French defence staff to the EUMS in Brussels and subsequently from Brussels to the OHQ in Paris, this cannot fully prevent a temporary break in planning. Under current arrangements, the Initiating Military Directive arrives in the OHQ as if descending from heaven - without the same staff having been working on the initiating phase.

6 CONCLUSION

This paper reviewed the political-strategic and military-strategic planning processes of the EUFOR Tchad/RCA operation with the aim of understanding how the operation was intended to generate the desired effects. First and foremost the paper shows that the EU has endowed the ESDP with an intricate set of planning procedures largely drawing from the NATO model and added a limited civil-military approach to it. This planning system has important merits: it is geared towards ensuring continuous political oversight, it structures the planning discussions and it allows for an incorporation of a wide range of relevant factors.

Regarding the application of this planning framework to the conflict in Chad and the CAR, secondly, the paper shows an important split assessment of the political and military processes. On the one hand, it makes clear how the EU was able to plan and conduct an operation that was highly challenging from a military perspective. On the other hand, it illustrated how the difficulty of defining strong common European interests poses a structural weakness in the political credibility of the ESDP. The political-strategic planning of EUFOR cannot be cited as proof of the EU acting in a unified and resolute way. Rather than being a problem of procedures, this is a fundamental consequence of the diverging political priorities of the member states.

Thirdly, the exploration of the actual operational design and concept development of EUFOR illustrates one type of military strategy developed to cope with the question of how one can achieve a malleable political objective such as a Safe and Secure Environment. A strategy of humanitarian deterrence, if sufficiently credible in terms of military capability and political intent, constitutes an answer. The effect that such a strategy enables, however, is only of a temporary nature and therefore unlikely to change the internal dynamic of conflict. In other words, as long as the extra time bought by deterrence is not put to use in the political domain, using other levers of power, such an operation will not have any lasting effect.

Fourthly and finally, it should be clear that although the strategy of deterrence deserves proper study, security challenges such as the one in Chad pose problems for strategic theory in general. Apart from deterrence and direct defence, it is not clear how, given the constraint of impartiality, other concepts would allow for the transformation of a military effort into political effects. A political conflict can only be addressed directly by military means by entering into the conflict itself and choosing sides, with all the risks and hazards that this implies.⁵⁸ The alternative is to keep the violent political conflict at arm's length from the civilian population by deterrence. Whether one sees this as a nonsensical band-aid solution or as a chivalric effort to separate warring parties from civilians is a matter for debate. What does seem clear, is that any actor with the ambition of managing conflict militarily should brace himself for facing a lengthy and difficult job.

⁵⁸ Cf. Betts 1994.

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