

INTRODUCTION

1. On 8th December 2003, the Council mandated that the EU's military rapid response capability should be further developed. Separately, France, Germany, and Britain have considered how the Union can contribute further to conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations in close co-operation with the United Nations (UN). Together, we have proposed that the EU should aim to build upon the precedent set by Operation ARTEMIS¹ in the DRC by developing a number of battle-group size forces available to undertake autonomous operations at short notice, principally in response to requests from the UN. These forces should be capable of operating under a Chapter VII mandate.

2. This paper aims to set out in more detail the battle-groups (BG) concept, to establish its context within the ongoing development of EU rapid response and EU-UN co-operation, and to propose a process of consultation (including with the UN) and implementation.

EU RAPID RESPONSE

3. The Council declaration mandated that EU military rapid response capability should be taken forward by work on the Headline Goal and the modalities of rapid response within the Union's institutional framework. This recognises that there are two main aspects to improving the EU's ability to conduct rapid response operations;

- a. Developing appropriate high readiness military capabilities
- b. Developing the necessary consultation, planning and decision-making mechanisms to enable rapid deployment.

¹ 2003 EU led operation in DRC which the EU launched an operation within two weeks of the adoption of UNSCR 1484 calling for a multinational interim emergency force in Bunia. Other national deployments into West Africa in recent years have been achieved in similar timescales.

4. The EU's initial rapid response concept was agreed in early 2003. This concept offers broad considerations for developing high readiness capabilities but stops short of making specific recommendations. The BG concept is therefore designed to provide the principal focus for rapid response capabilities development by targeting member states' collective efforts towards producing a catalogue of high utility force packages that can be tailored rapidly to specific missions, usable either individually or together in small multiples. This capabilities based initiative will, in turn, form part of the wider strands of work² that collectively form the effort to improve the EU's ability for rapid response.

OUTLINE BATTLE-GROUP CONCEPT

5. The key elements of the joint proposal are:

- Coherent, credible battle-group size force packages (around 1500 troops strong) including appropriate supporting elements (Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS)³) together with necessary strategic lift, sustainability, and debarkation (APOD, SPOD) capability.
- Designed specifically (but not exclusively) to be used in response to a request from the UN and capable of participating in an autonomous operation under a Chapter VII mandate⁴
- Appropriate for, but not limited to, use in failed or failing states (of which most are in Africa).
- Capable of deploying within 15 days to respond to a crisis⁵.

DETAILS

6. Requirements and Missions. With the exception of longer-term post conflict steady state, most missions within the scope of the Petersberg tasks have a rapid response component, and some may be critically dependent on speed of response e.g. focussed intervention in support of conflict prevention. However, success will almost always rely heavily on the ability to act decisively as well as quickly. Rapid response forces need not necessarily be large but they do need to be

² E.g. advance planning, permanent financing mechanisms, generic Status of Forces (SOFA) agreements etc.

³ Combat support (CS) - Fire support and operational assistance provided to combat elements.

Combat Service Support (CSS) - The support provided to combat forces, primarily in the fields of administration and logistics.

⁴ Action to restore international peace and security

⁵ Parameters for deployment times in response to a UN request will require further detailed consultation with DPKO.

militarily effective, credible, coherent and capable of stand-alone operations. The BG formation constitutes the generally accepted minimum force package meeting such requirements. Detailed consultation with the UN could further refine the mission set for which BGs would be best suited (within the spectrum of current and potential future Petersberg tasks).

7. Composition. The key criteria for battle-group composition and formation under this initiative should be military effectiveness (measured against likely missions), deployability, and readiness. Since the most demanding missions may well involve the separation of conflicting parties or the prevention of atrocities, formations capable of higher intensity operations will be essential in the BG pool and would also have a particular utility as initial-entry forces for operations on a larger scale and/or at the higher end of the spectrum of EU missions. A suggested 'baseline' BG configuration is at Annex A together with an indication of the associated CS and CSS required; this is based on a typical infantry BG. The proposed order of battle represents a starting point only; development of formations of similar size and combat power but trained in particular skill sets (eg urban, mountain, jungle, desert, amphibious) would be welcomed to widen the range of crisis response options available to the EU.

8. Readiness. Operational experience suggests that the consultation and decision timelines for the types of mission envisaged in paragraph 6 will be short. To be effective in such circumstances, and to be able to meet the overall objective of being ready for operations within likely operating areas (in central Africa or elsewhere) within 15 days, BG formations will need to be fully manned, equipped and trained, and held at high readiness (typically 10 days notice (or less)) to be deployed.

9. Multinationality. BGs could be formed by a nation alone, by a framework nation with other nations contributing niche, or specialist, enabling capabilities, or by a multinational solution. The latter would be particularly welcome in the case of countries unable to contribute a full BG alone. Multinational solutions will have to demonstrate a high degree of interoperability and will be required, as a matter of routine, to train and operate together. Ultimately military effectiveness should be the overriding criteria.

10. Deployability. Assured deployability is a fundamental component of this concept. Member states offering BGs will need to ensure that their bid includes appropriate strategic lift assets, pre-identified, earmarked and available to meet the 15-day target. These assets could be owned, or made available through dormant charter or other national or multinational solutions. For example,

as a general guide, the baseline BG formation at Annex A would require up to 200 C130/ 30 C17(outsized) aircraft sorties for initial deployment to a central African theatre. Sea transportation is a credible option for certain scenarios and might be especially appropriate for maritime member states geographically closer to potential crisis regions. In this case around 1400 LIMS of shipping space would be necessary for initial deployment.⁴

11. Sustainability. Logistic self-sufficiency and sustainability is equally important. BGs will need to be capable of sustained operations through to mission terminations or until relieved by UN peacekeepers or regional organisations acting under a UN mandate. The identification of such a follow on force will take time. As a planning basis BGs should therefore be sustainable for 30 days initial operations extendable to at least 120 days. These assumptions may however need to be refined following discussion with the UN (DPKO). Achieving this will require sufficient deployable logistic support for all elements of the BG and (depending on mission) elements of some or all of the following; medical support, movement and transportation support, engineer support, equipment maintenance, petrol/oils/lubricants (POL). Given the likely operational theatres, host nation support will be variable and, in the worst case, almost non-existent.

12. Training. Training will be a member state responsibility. BGs formed and declared as available under this concept will need to undertake regular and realistic training in deployed intervention and peace support operations at unit (i.e. whole BG) level. Undertaking such training in a realistic environment will be particularly beneficial in ensuring a genuinely expeditionary capability, including debarkation (APOD, SPOD).

COMMAND AND CONTROL

13. Operations involving the deployment of BGs as set out in this concept will be conducted under the command of an appropriate OHQ and FHQ in accordance with established principles for the command of ESDP operations. For such demanding operations in a potentially hostile environment HQs will require the full range of Joint Staff functions together with specialist support (e.g. tropical medicine). Such HQ facilities will need to be available within appropriate time-scales. Currently 3 OHQs and 2 FHQs are declared to the Force Catalogue at 10 days readiness or less. As BGs are designed to provide a rapid response capability and a number are likely to be single nation or

⁴ Linear Metres. Figures based on an UK Marine Commando Group. For comparison each UK RoRo Ship provides

framework nation in construction, the principles of command and control set out in the EU Framework Nation Concept⁷ are likely to be applicable in many cases, albeit with due regard to the requirement for rapid augmentation and multi-nationalisation of the designated HQs. Dependent on the exact circumstances of the mission a number of wider possibilities exist for providing a satisfactory FHQ solution, for example;

- If a BG was deployed into a theatre to assist another force (eg UN or regional peacekeepers), it will co-ordinate with an existing HQ. The EU's OHQ, in liaison with DPKO when the UN is involved, would still be responsible for mounting and sustaining the force, but instead of creating a separate FHQ, staff officers from EU member states could join with the existing HQ.
- For a small, benign and primarily land operation, an FHQ might be established based around an existing Brigade HQ augmented by tri-service and multinational liaison officers as appropriate. For operations with a more maritime bias an afloat FHQ, based on member states' existing maritime HQ capabilities, might be equally appropriate.

FORCE IDENTIFICATION AND GENERATION

14. The general principles and procedures for force identification and generation for operations involving BGs will remain in accordance with those endorsed by the EUMC in September 2002.⁸ However the balanced and coherent nature of a BG properly constituted under this initiative, together with the pre-identification of deployment and sustainment options, should greatly streamline the process. Ultimately however, the precise composition of the force will be the responsibility of the designated Operational Commander in consultation with provider nations.

15. It is not envisaged that BGs formed under this concept should be assigned to a standing rotation or roster. The aim will be to establish an inventory of high readiness BGs (initially 7-9) providing the 'first stop' option for EU rapid response forces and specified in a short document dedicated to rapid reaction, which should replace the High Readiness Capabilities data base. Contributing nations may, of course, establish an internal rotation of national formations assigned to this initiative, with due regard to the need to maintain standards of military effectiveness.

⁸ 2500 LIMS of sealift.

⁷ COSDP 247 11278/02 dated 25 Jul 02.

16. Relief options for a Battle Group deployed on rapid response operations should be identified as early as possible in the planning process. To facilitate this, and assist follow on arrangements, wherever possible the duration of the mission should be clearly stated in the operation's mandate.

STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION

17. In consultation with the UN, the EUMC should agree detailed military capability standards for BG formations offered to the EU's catalogue of forces in response to this initiative, together with a list of further optional criteria for specialist skill areas. The EUMC may wish periodically to assess and certify formations to satisfy itself that these standards are being met and maintained. This could be an appropriate task for the Agency.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

18. SHIRBRIG. The BG concept should be developed in a manner complementary to the UN's SHIRBRIG initiative. Compared with a single BG, SHIRBRIG is a larger (up to brigade) sized force held at slightly lower readiness (15-30 days) and constituted principally for operations under a Chapter VI mandate. It is possible that SHIRBRIG could be used to relieve a rapidly deployed BG but the detailed interrelation of the two concepts will need to be developed in consultation with the UN.

19. Relationship to NRF. For those member states also in NATO, BG formations that meet the requirements set out in this concept will have potential utility as a contribution to the NATO Response Force rotation, subject to the availability of common forces for both the EU and NATO, and the strict capabilities and training requirements for forces offered to the NRF pool. The opposite may equally apply in that forces from EU member states that are pre-identified for a specific NRF rotation may be used in the context of EU rapid response. Subject to EU/NATO transparency concerning member state contributions during force generation for operations, this initiative and NRF should be complementary and mutually reinforcing, with both providing a positive impetus for capability improvement.

³ Council of the European Union's 12398/02 dated 26 Sept 02. General Principles and Procedures for EU Forces

20. Links to Follow-on Forces. The UN will be concerned to achieve good linkages to related civil agencies and continuity to a follow-on force such as SHIRBRIG or a regionally generated force. This may require the BG to take under command lead elements of the successor formation or leave small elements behind for an overlap. In the longer term linkages may be built between BGs and in country peacekeeping capabilities (developed for example under the Common Policy on Africa)

21. Structured Co-operation. Finally, providing (or contributing to) a BG type formation remains a potential qualification criterion for a future structured co-operation arrangement, should such an arrangement ultimately enter in to force.

WAY AHEAD

22. Subject to PSC agreement to undertake further development of this concept, it is proposed that:

- The Presidency, supported by the EUMS and other relevant Council bodies, initiate consultation with the UN in order to refine further how this concept might be developed to meet likely UN requirements, possibly leading to a public statement by the Secretary-General
- Based on such consultation the EUMC be tasked (by April 2004) to produce further detailed proposals for BG development for PSC, and subsequent Council, endorsement. The aim should be for an agreed concept by the end of the current Irish Presidency.
- The BG proposal be factored into the broader work streams developing EU rapid response, particularly the Headline Goal aspects.
- Subject to Council endorsement, member states provide specific proposals for individual BG formation reporting their intentions to the Council by December 2004 including a declaration of target dates for full operational capability (FOC). The indicative date for FOC should be 2007.

PROPOSED BASELINE BATTLE GROUP CONFIGURATION

Manoeuvre Formation

Battalion HQ
3 x Infantry Companies
Support Company (comprising recce, mortars & anti tank platoon)
Troop armoured recce.
Light engineer Sqn
Light Gun battery
Detachment from AD battery
Troop from Brigade Support Sqn (organic logistic support)

Combat Support and Combat Service Support.

Dependent on circumstances (mission/theatre/threat), elements of some or all of the following:

Aviation
Artillery
Communications
Engineers
Electronic Warfare
Air support
Transport
CBRN defence
PSYOPS capability
CIMIC
Military Police
Medical
Public Affairs
Specialist or additional logistics
Embarkation/debarkation capability
Theatre logistics and NSE