



# RAPID REACTION CAPABILITY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Taking that Last Big Step

By MAJ Matthew McCray



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## ***ABOUT THE AUTHOR***

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## **Rapid Reaction Capability of the European Union:**

### **Taking that Last Big Step**

By Matthew McCray

...the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises.

— *The St. Malo Declaration, Bilateral Statement of French President Jacques Chirac and the British Prime Minister, 1998*

### **Introduction**

The formation of an Army of Europe has been discussed almost since the end of World War II, but has yet to be realized. After reading through the numerous and varied proposals over the past sixty years, the observer invariably arrives at the conclusion that all concerned parties agree: the European Union (EU) should have its own military. The Union today, taken as a whole, is an economic and cultural superpower. Its leading nations seem to be willing to pursue the status of a humanitarian superpower and leader in conflict prevention, as well as to defend the Europe's perceived collective interests in the world.<sup>1</sup>

Instability is rampant around the fringes of the EU; situations abound that could require a quick and decisive application of military force. The outcomes of the Arab Spring are not yet clear, but its effects will reverberate for years to come. Al-Qaida affiliates are growing in strength in Central Africa. Ethnic enclaves and unresolved territorial disputes still remain across Eastern Europe and Central Asia, while the effects of the Syrian civil war have already spread into neighboring countries. With the impending conclusion of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia, Europe is determined to put the unpleasant specter of the Balkan wars firmly in the past. Most recently, Europe has been made keenly aware of the limits of soft power by Russia's seizure of Crimea and its continuing threat to eastern Ukraine.

The larger nations of the EU have shown that they are willing to lead military operations where they believe the Union's interests are threatened. Deployments to Libya and Mali are two recent examples, but these actions were ad hoc efforts. The forces were gathered over weeks, if not

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<sup>1</sup> "Its broad range of instruments, financial largesse and image of a benevolent soft power allow the EU to lead prevention activities from sub-Saharan Africa to the Arctic Ocean and from Central Asia to Morocco. With a seven-year budget of \$2.59 billion for its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), an Instrument of Stability worth over \$3 billion for a seven year-period, and \$80 billion of development aid available within the EU and member states combined in 2010, the EU's financial capacity to prevent conflict is unrivaled." Jonas Claes, "EU Conflict Prevention Revisited," *Peacebrief*, United States Institute for Peace, 93 (May 2011). See also Reinhardt Rummel, "The EU's Involvement in Conflict Prevention- Strategy and Practice," in *The European Union and Conflict Prevention: Policy and Legal Aspects*, edited by Vincent Kronenberger and Jan Wouters (The Hague: T.M.C. Asser Press, 2004).

months, and required extensive American support to deploy.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, EU Member States are facing budget shortfalls and defense spending has become unpopular. For example, the Netherlands recently announced the complete elimination of its armored forces, without consulting either the EU or NATO.<sup>3</sup> In addition, while the sum of Europe's military forces is greater than the number of troops possessed by either Russia or the United States, most are non-deployable, equipment is obsolete or incompatible, and wasteful redundancy is rife.<sup>4</sup>

Nonetheless, within EU Member States, there are a multitude of varied, competent, and effective military units. Given time for proper planning and preparation (as was the case with protracted deployments such as Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan and the various EU-led missions in the former Yugoslavia), these units can cooperate with one another and deal with low-intensity conflict reasonably well. The EU has engineered a number of systems with which to generate combat power on short notice and has constructed a large military command and control (C2) apparatus.<sup>5</sup> However, these systems are based on ad hoc and temporary designs and have yet to be tested. As such, they carry a degree of risk to both the lives of service members and to the EU's image abroad. Although Europe has successfully conducted several military operations in the past decade, success was never directly attributable to EU leadership and the Union's own limited military capabilities were never used on a rapid-response basis. Planning, leadership, logistics, strategic support assets and the expeditionary "spearhead" of each operation fell to the contributing countries with the deepest pockets.<sup>6</sup>

Speaking solely on the basis of logistics, an effective rapid reaction force (RRF) is very feasible and would offer great benefits to the EU. Indeed, if such a force had been readily available to deploy at the time, it would have been of great value in situations such as Rwanda in 1994 or in Srebrenica the following year. It would be relatively easy for the wealthy European countries to overcome the stumbling blocks of forming such a force (e.g. financing, nationalism, basing, command, and deployment) because there is a centuries-long history of military professionalism and excellence on the continent. However, problems inherent to a loose confederation of states have hampered the cooperation necessary for many projects so far.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Gabe Starosta, "The Role of the U.S. Air Force in the French Mission in Mali," *Air Force Magazine* (4 November 2013), available at: <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/the-role-of-the-us-air-force-in-the-french-mission-in-mali>.

<sup>3</sup> Jeffery Stacey and Erik Brattberg, "The West's Coming Joint Security Trap: Don't Go Dutch," *E!Sharp* (January 2012), available at: <http://esharp.eu/big-debates/external-action/11-the-west-s-coming-joint-security-trap-don-t-go-dutch/> (accessed 17 December 2013).

<sup>4</sup> Within Europe, there exist simultaneously 27 military headquarters, 20 different military academies, and four types of fighter aircraft under development. Out of 1.6 million troops in the EU, only 106,000 could be deployed at all, and it is highly probable that only a minute fraction of these could be deployed on short notice. See also "European Defence Capabilities: lessons from the past, signposts for the future - European Union Committee," available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201012/ldselect/lddeucom/292/29206.htm#n111> (accessed 7 June 2014), 37-38.

<sup>5</sup> For an elaborate chart detailing the Union's Military Staff (EUMS), see: [http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/structures-instruments-agencies/eu-military-staff/images/eums\\_organigramme\\_october2014.jpg](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/structures-instruments-agencies/eu-military-staff/images/eums_organigramme_october2014.jpg) (accessed 16 December 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Operation Althea in 2003, EUFOR DR Congo in 2006, EUFOR TChad/RCA in 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Derek Brown, "The European Rapid Reaction Force," *The Guardian* (11 April 2001).



An authentic rapid reaction force, created and administered by the European Union, would supplement NATO force structures, contribute to the defense of Europe, and could respond to major emergencies around the world. This paper demonstrates that creation of such an entity is a logistically feasible goal - even in the current climate of political uncertainty.

The intangible benefits would also be considerable. A unified, competent, capable, and supranational organization within the EU, in which the participants have set aside national interests for a common ideal, would be a powerful symbol for the Union and the international community. The men and women who would serve in such an organization would most likely return to their home countries with a new sense of affiliation to the EU. Additionally, if a mechanism were developed to offer people citizenship in an EU state after having completed a military service commitment, many would be likely to find this to be a strong recruiting incentive to encourage potential service members to join this military force. Over generations, this has the potential to help cement the union more strongly. Such a force would provide a credible military organization that operates independently of the EU's "powerhouse" economies and would give the poorer nations of the EU a voice in international military matters.

## Historical Background

The more optional the war, the weaker the support achieved...the more dangerous the mission, the more contested it becomes.  
— Janne Haaland Matlary<sup>8</sup>

The creation of a European military has been intrinsically tied to the first attempts towards a union of European states. With the formation of NATO, the advent of the Cold War, and the military supremacy of the United States, the issue became an almost moot point of Pan-European thought. Once the various treaties and agreements between states coalesced into the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, the EU again discussed the issue of military cooperation. However, such discussions were met with limited participation and little enthusiasm from Member States. This collective lack of military solidarity possibly contributed to the Union's impotent and anemic response to the crisis in Balkans during the 1990s.<sup>9</sup>

In 1992, the forerunner of the EU, the Western European Union (WEU) agreed upon a number of responsibilities, known as "Petersberg Tasks," for which military forces would be pooled when necessary.<sup>10</sup> These tasks were somewhat limited in scope and were a marked withdrawal from the strategies of total war that had dominated military planning in the previous fifty years.

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<sup>8</sup> Janne Haaland Matlary, "EU Foreign Policy: 'High politics,' low impact – and vice versa?" in Fredrik Bynander and Stefano Guzzini, *Rethinking Foreign Policy* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 143.

<sup>9</sup> Graham Jones, "Srebrenica, Triumph of Evil," *CNN International* (10 April 10 2007), available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/europe/02/22/warcrimes.srebrenica> (accessed 17 December 2013).

<sup>10</sup> Western European Union, "Petersberg Declaration," 1992, available at: <http://www.weu.int/documents/920619peten.pdf>. These tasks are still guiding principles of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP).

The Petersberg Tasks included the following:

- Humanitarian and rescue tasks
- Conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks
- Tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking
- Joint disarmament operations
- Military advice and assistance tasks
- Post-conflict stabilization tasks

With an eye on the Petersberg Tasks, the WEU was able to create the Eurocorps in 1992, a brigade consisting of troops from five nations, who are not under the direct command of any single contributing country. Personnel have been relinquished from their home nations to serve under the command of a supranational body and have served under this command in potential combat situations, which is an important step. The case of the Eurocorps provides an example of how some of the obstacles involved in supranational military organizations can be overcome.<sup>11</sup>

In retrospect, the Petersberg Tasks and the Eurocorps seem to be tailor-made for the Bosnian crisis. Despite these plans, however, it was the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations (UN), not a European body, which were the driving forces behind the belated humanitarian intervention to stop the butchery. This caused some embarrassment in many European governments when the enormity of the genocide that happened “in their own backyard” came to light.<sup>12</sup>

Development of an EU security strategy has taken place through a convoluted process in a series of decisions taken mostly at EU Council meetings (see Figure 1). Similarly, the European Parliament recently voted to create the Synchronized Armed Forces Europe (SAFE) with an accompanying council for the formation of a doctrine and the “Pooling and Sharing Concept.”<sup>13</sup>

While the concept of collective European defense through pooled and shared military resources has progressively solidified, NATO is still at the forefront of external defense. Also, since the United States is still willing to bear the majority of costs associated with military actions<sup>14</sup> and provide for critical shortfalls of equipment,<sup>15</sup> the state of a unified EU military remains questionable at best.

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<sup>11</sup> The Eurocorps was able to overcome some of the stumbling blocks that still beleaguer efforts to create an EU RRF capability; HQ Eurocorps actually commanded the ISAF effort for six months (!) in 2004-2005. It has deployed personnel to serve in headquarters and staff functions in such low intensity situations as Bosnia and Kosovo, and similarly sent small numbers of personnel to ISAF in Afghanistan. However, aside from the one ISAF deployment, it remains a somewhat amorphous body that is reliant on troop contributions from willing nations and has never overcome the general malaise affecting such efforts, namely the reluctance of these nations to deploy large units into potentially high-intensity, casualty-producing situations. For more on this, see the official Eurocorps website at: <http://www.eurocorps.org> (accessed 6 June 2014).

<sup>12</sup> Vernon Bogdanor, “Srebrenica: The Silence over Britain’s Guilt Must Be Ended,” *The Guardian* (12 July 2012).

<sup>13</sup> European Defence Agency, *Fact Sheet: EDA’s Pooling and Sharing*, 2012, (accessed 14 December 2013).

<sup>14</sup> The U.S. provides almost a quarter of NATO’s budget; See “NATO funding,” available at: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_67655.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_67655.htm) (accessed 6 June 2014).

<sup>15</sup> Nikolaj Nielsen, “NATO Commander: EU could Not Do Libya without US,” *EU Observer* (20 March 2013), available at: <http://euobserver.com/defence/115650> (accessed 6 June 2014).

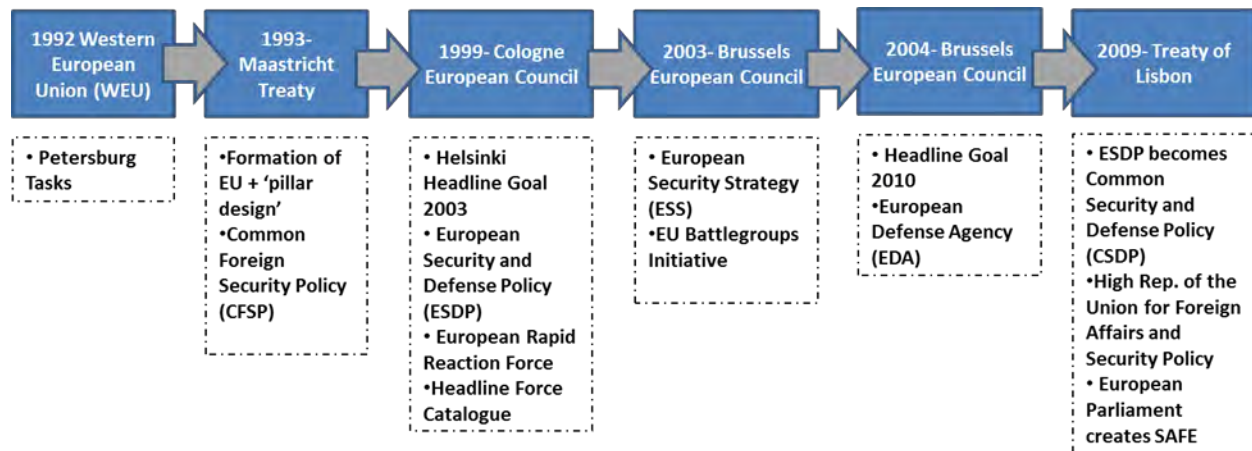


Figure 1: Milestones of EU Security Policy

In addition to the 1992 agreement on the Petersberg Tasks, the Maastricht Treaty, which entered into force in November 1993, established the European Union, delineating three “pillars” upon which it would be based. One of these is the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP),<sup>16</sup> which in turn created a number of bodies to deal with security matters, such as the Political and Security Committee<sup>17</sup> (PSC) and the European Institute for Security Studies (ISS).<sup>18</sup> A major element of the CFSP is the Common Security and Defense Policy, which deals with military issues and crisis management.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps most importantly, the office of a High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy was also formed, which created a leadership position for the developing security apparatus. This represented a critical step forward in that it marked the beginning of what the military would refer to as a unified command, which streamlined decision-making processes and concentrated responsibility for the Union’s foreign affairs under one individual.<sup>20</sup>

During the 1999 European Council meeting in Helsinki, Member States signed the Helsinki Headline Goal, laying out somewhat hazy plans to create a European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF),<sup>21</sup> conceived as a self-sustaining force of up to 60,000, which would be deployable within 60 days.<sup>22</sup> Also included within this initiative were initial plans for the EU Battlegroup,

<sup>16</sup> Europa, Synthèses de la législation, *Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the European Union*, available at: [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/glossary/foreign\\_security\\_policy\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/foreign_security_policy_en.htm) (accessed 17 April 2014).

<sup>17</sup> Europa, Synthèse de la législation. *Political and Security Committee (PSC)*, available at: [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/glossary/political\\_security\\_committee\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/political_security_committee_en.htm) (accessed 19 December 2013).

<sup>18</sup> European Institute for Security Studies, available at: <http://www.iss.europa.eu/> (accessed 12 December 2013).

<sup>19</sup> Europa, Synthèse de la législation. *Common Defense and Security Policy*, available at: [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/institutional\\_affairs/treaties/lisbon\\_treaty/ai0026\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/institutional_affairs/treaties/lisbon_treaty/ai0026_en.htm) (accessed 16 December 2013).

<sup>20</sup> High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, available at: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/policies/council-configurations/foreign-affairs/high-representative-of-the-union-for-foreign-affairs-and-security-policy?lang=e>.

<sup>21</sup> European Union External Action, *About CSDP: Military Headline Goals*, available at: [http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/about-csdp/military\\_headline\\_goals/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/about-csdp/military_headline_goals/index_en.htm) (accessed 12 December 2013). See also Myrto Hatzigeorgopoulos, “The Role of EU Battlegroups in European Defense,” *European Security Review* (June 2012).

<sup>22</sup> The deadline for activation of the ERRF (the 2010 Headline Goal) has quietly expired. The ERRF concept seems to be modeled almost directly after the Eurocorps, which became operational in 1995, but (besides an 8-month headquarters-only rotation in ISAF, and a 6-month rotation through Kosovo) it has never been employed in its

that is, battalion-sized<sup>23</sup> elements contributed from Member States that could provide “rapid” responses. The Headline Goal tasked Member States with “being able to provide rapid response elements available and deployable at very high levels of readiness” by 2003.<sup>24</sup> The test of this concept came immediately that year, with Operation Artemis, the first autonomous deployment of troops under EU auspices, which will be discussed later in greater detail.<sup>25</sup>

The concept of the Headline Goal provided for three main types of operations for the Battlegroups (BG): 1) “bridging,” where the BG would deploy in support of forces already deployed; 2) “initial rapid entry response” operations, where the BG would pave the way for a larger follow-on force (such as the European RRF) and 3) “stand-alone” operations, where the BG would deploy on a short-term basis for situations requiring a limited response. There were a number of missions that the Battlegroups were to be prepared to conduct (Figure 2).

Scenario	Potential missions
Separation of parties by force	Securing key areas
Conflict prevention	Preventive deployment
Stabilization, reconstruction, and military advice to third countries	Initial entry point
Evacuation operations in a non-permissive environment	Non-combatant evacuation
Assistance to humanitarian operations	Deliverance of humanitarian aid

Figure 2: Illustrative Scenarios<sup>26</sup>

The 2003 Brussels European Council laid out the European Security Strategy (ESS), clarifying and replacing the European Security and Defense Policy. It singled out five key security threats for the EU: terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, state failure, and organized crime.<sup>27</sup> In addition, the “Berlin-Plus” agreement between the EU and NATO was signed in 2003, allowing the EU to use NATO force structures for EU-led crisis management operations.

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entirety in a combat situation or in a rapid-reaction, expeditionary capacity. Defence Dateline Group, “EU Debates of Attrition: A Slow Death for Europe's ‘Rapid Reaction Force’?” *Defence IQ* (15 February 2011), available at: <http://www.defenceiq.com/air-land-and-sea-defence-services/articles/eu-debates-of-attrition-the-slow-death-of-europe-s/> (accessed 18 April 2014).

<sup>23</sup> A battalion consists of 3-5 companies of troops, for a total of approximately 600-900 troop strength. The Battlegroup is a strong battalion with the additional support troops needed to be self-sustaining, i.e. about 1500 soldiers.

<sup>24</sup> European Union External Action, “Common Security and Defence Policy: EU Battlegroups,” (Information Paper, 2013).

<sup>25</sup> Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, Military Division, *Operation Artemis: The Lessons of the Interim Emergency Multinational Force* (United Nations, 2004).

<sup>26</sup> Gustav Lindstrom, “Enter the EU Battlegroups,” *Chaillot Paper* (European Union Institute for Security Studies) (February 2007): 18.

<sup>27</sup> European Union External Action, *European Security Strategy*; available at: <http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/about-csdp/european-security-strategy/> (accessed 17 December, 2013).

In 2004, the program for a rapid-response capability saw slow progress. “The European Capability Action Plan remains an essentially intergovernmental process, with limited leadership and coordination, and with insufficient incentives for Member States to take action.”<sup>28</sup> Despite this, the European Defense Agency (EDA) was successfully established in that same year in order to coordinate military research and industrial cooperation. With the results of the ambitious Headline Goal 2003 only partially complete, the EU refined its security requirements more qualitatively than in 1999, and set a new deadline for 2010,<sup>29</sup> mandating that the EU’s RRFs be able to conduct more than one operation at a time, while illustrating five scenarios in which the Battlegroups should be prepared to engage:

- Separation of parties by force
- Stabilization, reconstruction, and military advice to third countries
- Conflict prevention
- Evacuation operations
- Assistance to humanitarian operations<sup>30</sup>

In 2009, the Lisbon Treaty consolidated control of the EU’s security organs under a single chief coordinator<sup>31</sup> and mandated that EU states assist each other in the event of a natural or man-made disaster or terrorist attack, and established the Permanent Structured Cooperation in Defense (another bureaucratic offshoot of a treaty, this one attempting to outline permanent cooperation between the major military powers of the EU).<sup>32</sup> Although the Union’s military structure has continued to evolve, there has been no real progress towards an effective RRF in the last five years.<sup>33</sup>

### **The Current Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) System**

[It] is also clear that European defence can only be successful if underpinned by the necessary military capabilities; otherwise it is but an empty shell. And it is no secret that we still lack critical capabilities.

—Catherine Ashton, *Keynote address at EDA Annual Conference, March 2014*

Despite the occurrence of a number of crises that met the Union’s criteria for intervention, the EU has not yet deployed a Battlegroup in actual combat. However, a number of important

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<sup>28</sup> Jelena Juvan and Vladimir Prebilic, “Towards Stronger EU Military and Defence Capabilities?” *Journal on European Perspective of the Western Balkans*, 4:4 (October 2012): 129.

<sup>29</sup> Didier Laporte and Johann Fischer, “The EU Headline Goal Process,” in *Military Capability Development in the Framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy*, edited by Jörg Hillmann and Constantinos Hadjisavvas (Nicosia: Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU 2012 / Ministry of Defence, 2012).

<sup>30</sup> Juvan and Prebilic.

<sup>31</sup> The title of this position would not fit neatly on a paper nametag: the earlier-discussed “High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.”

<sup>32</sup> Council of the European Union, “Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and on the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,” *Treaty of Lisbon* (Brussels: Council of the European Union, 2008).

<sup>33</sup> While the reader’s eyes may have already glazed over in this very truncated version of the EU development of military capability, a more nuanced and complete perspective on the evolution of EU military structure and capabilities is available in LTCOL (German Army) Peter Fischer’s excellent work, *European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) After Ten Years – Current Situation and Perspectives* (Fort Leavenworth Kansas: U.S. Army War College, 2012).



lessons can be learned from other recent EU deployments. Operation Artemis (stabilization in the Democratic Republic of Congo or DRC) was an important test case for EU planners. Most of the planning for Headline Goal 2010 incorporated the after-action reviews of that operation. Other expeditionary missions undertaken by the EU, such as EUFOR RD in the Congo/DRC in 2008, EUFOR TCHAD/RCA in Chad, and the intervention in the Central African Republic in 2007, provided additional lessons for EU military cooperation.<sup>34</sup>

With the inception of the Battlegroup concept, the EU began creating these new combat units—completely from the ground up—for six-month readiness periods. Fourteen Battlegroups have been formed in the last six years, but none have been composed of the same units twice. This pattern is to continue in the foreseeable future.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, the Operational Headquarters (OHQ) for each of the Battlegroups has also changed locations and leadership every six months.<sup>36</sup> Aside from engendering enormous extraneous costs, this practice invariably and needlessly causes friction before these units are ever put into action. Such piecemeal construction results in leadership that is unfamiliar with its chain of command, personnel, organization, and equipment.

As any experienced military leader can attest, this situation will undoubtedly sap troops' morale and confidence. Militaries that are thrown together in such a fashion must also be brought into compliance with one another. Mismatched equipment exponentially multiplies logistics trails and each different piece of equipment needs different spare parts, experts, fluids, etc. This further increases the cost and lengthens the preparation time required for forming the Battlegroup and bringing it to a ready status. Continuity of leadership is also adversely affected: even if the units comprising the Battlegroups are fortunate enough to retain leaders who had served in the previous rotation, most countries' Battlegroup rotations are years apart and valuable experience is lost in the interim.

Furthermore, Battlegroups have no mandated force structure, which, according to the EU CSDP, “provides Member States with the necessary flexibility to form their own Battlegroup package.”<sup>37</sup> However, this may lead to gaps in critical proficiencies. So-called “niche capabilities,” or “enablers,” that is, units which exist as integral and indispensable parts of modern armies' deployable strength (for example: CBRN,<sup>38</sup> water purification, maritime transport, bomb disposal, or medical capabilities) are also only available on an ad hoc basis.

Only a few of EU Member States possess all of these units. Consequently, although it is mandated that Battlegroups be able to deploy “independently,” most Battlegroups are formed with only a few of the required niche capabilities and must either go without or hastily add the necessary units at the last minute of a deployment.<sup>39</sup> For example, during the 2010 EUTM operation in Uganda, contributing countries “could not deliver a single medical officer across the

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<sup>35</sup> The EU considers the intervention in Congo as a dramatic success, which probably “prevented a genocide,” Parliament.uk 2012, 58.

<sup>35</sup> Global Security, *EU Battlegroup* (1 October 2012), available at: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/eu-battlegroups.htm> (accessed 16 December 2013).

<sup>36</sup> Wikipedia, *EU Battlegroup* (19 April 2014), available at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EU\\_Battlegroup](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EU_Battlegroup) (accessed 7 May 2014).

<sup>37</sup> European Union External Action, “Common Security.”

<sup>38</sup> Abbreviation of “Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear.”

<sup>39</sup> European Union Military Committee, *EU Battlegroup Concept* (Council of the European Union, 2006).

EU to care for the trainers.”<sup>40</sup> In addition, the OHQ is not necessarily an integral part of the Battlegroup, as illustrated in Figure 2. This creates another possible weak link in a chain of command between the operational units and the EU Military Staff (EUMS). Airlift, sealift, strategic logistics, and special operations forces are also organized and added to the Battlegroup on an “as-needed” basis, contributing to lengthy preparation and deployment times.<sup>41</sup>

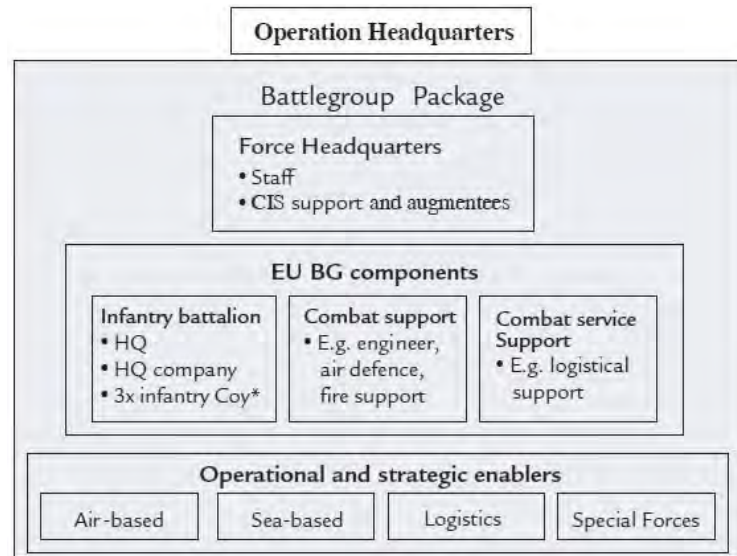


Figure 3: Battlegroup Organization<sup>42</sup>

Once more, as any military officer who has served in a coalition will verify, setting up and running a functional logistics effort (or operations section, personnel management, command relationships, finance matters, etc.) in a multi-national setting, is a herculean task- and usually not very successful. These problems occur even in well-established militaries, albeit to a lesser extent. The problems multiply and metastasize in multi-lingual and ad hoc institutions that are comprised of members from different countries, militaries, and ethnic backgrounds.

These difficulties translate into greater operating costs and manpower requirements when regular military functions (such as transport of supplies) need to be supplemented with more expensive commercial means. Growing such new organizations also extends preparation and deployment times. This translates into prolonging the conflict or suffering that these deployments are designed to mitigate.

Examples of logistical problems with the current system are discussed widely in academic settings, but they are rarely highlighted in official EU materials. In a review of the 2008 Nordic Battlegroup, the Swedish Riksdag gives a very candid account of what was probably a fairly typical preparation of a Battlegroup.<sup>43</sup> The projected cost of preparations and operations of the

<sup>40</sup> Parliament.uk 2012, 61.

<sup>41</sup> Of the aforementioned 27 European military headquarters, nearly all have completely different logistical systems. Parliament.uk 2012, 37.

<sup>42</sup> European Union External Action (n.d.).

<sup>43</sup> The Nordic BG is widely regarded as one of the best equipped, created with nearly every “niche capability” within the BG: fire support, CBRN, engineers, air defense, medical capabilities, etc. Andersson 2006, 39.

Battlegroup for a six-month alert period was about one billion Swedish krona (about 110 million Euros or 150 million dollars) and was expected to use 1,100 service members. The final cost of preparation was 4 billion krona (almost 450 million Euros, or 600 million dollars), with the Battlegroup ultimately requiring 2,350 soldiers.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, Operation EUFOR TCHAD in 2007-2008 was also plagued by problems in logistics. The originally planned deployment date was November 2007, and the group was expected to be fully operational by May 2008. The force was not fully operational until September 2008, however, halfway through the mission's mandated timeline.<sup>45</sup> Recreation of Battlegroups is needless duplication of effort and unnecessary financial costs to contributing countries are only the most obvious problem of the current system.

Compatibility of equipment is another problem encountered on recent EU deployments. Although most EU countries use NATO-compatible systems, in the EUFOR TCHAD operation, the French were forced to distribute their own command-and-control (C2) equipment (such as radios, as well as liaison/interpreter teams) to all national partners in order to share information and ensure communications with higher echelons.<sup>46</sup>

Other command and control problems are significant. Command of Battlegroups is kept by the host nation(s) until they are deployed, when it supposedly would fall under a hastily organized EU command center.<sup>47</sup> The current EU Operations Center (EU OpsCentre) is not permanently manned and has only ten permanent staff. When needed, it is augmented by officers from the EUMS. During the preparations for the EUFOR TCHAD operation, the French leadership actually urged that the OpsCentre not be activated due to the additional workload that would be placed on the EU staff. This occurred despite the demonstrated need for an additional 76 personnel during a recent command post exercise.<sup>48</sup> To put it bluntly, "The simple process of familiarizing all augmentees with the operation and learning to work together requires time... getting a skeleton HQ up to work at full power takes about 3 months."<sup>49</sup> The practice of using a majority of officers who are unfamiliar with the units and command structures operating under such a headquarters is, in the author's opinion, a recipe for failure. Without distinct and well-worn lines of command, these difficulties also extend to the operational and tactical levels. For example, during the EUFOR T/CHAD operation, in an event where several French special operations personnel were killed, EUFOR leadership was not even aware of the mission of the special operations platoon.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> The Swedish National Audit Office, *The Nordic Battlegroup 2008 – A Part of the EU's Rapid Reaction Capability* (2010).

<sup>45</sup> IRIN, UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Chad: Dual Peacekeeping Mission Seeks to Dispel Confusion* (11 January 2008), available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/report/76196/chad-dual-peacekeeping-mission-seeks-to-dispel-confusion> (accessed 11 December 2013).

<sup>46</sup> Alexander Mattelaer, *The Strategic Planning of EU Military* (Brussels: Institute for European Studies, 2008).

<sup>47</sup> Parliament.uk 2012, 67.

<sup>48</sup> Vice Admiral Jean-Pierre Tiffou, interview by Bjoern H. Seibert. *Former French Military Representative to the EU* (12 October 2009); see also Nicholas Fiorenza, "EU Activates Operations Center for the First Time During MIEC Exercise," *Jane's Defence Weekly* (2007).

<sup>49</sup> Mattelaer, *Strategic Planning*.

<sup>50</sup> Gerald Hainzl and Walter Feichtinger, "EUFOR TChad/RCA Revisited – A Synopsis," in *EUFOR TChad/RCA Revisited*, edited by Gerald Hainzl and Walter Feichtinger (Vienna: Austrian Armed Forces, 2009).

Furthermore, while strategic planning was accomplished at the EU Secretariat and the Military Staff, operational planning was taken up by the French Defense Staff because the French were the lead nation and force provider for the mission. In Mittelaer's words, "The Initiating Military Directive [from the EU Council Secretariat] arrives in the [French] Operational Headquarters as if descending from heaven—without the same staff having been working on the initiating phase."<sup>51</sup> In addition, the Operational Headquarters does not deploy or even derive from the same Member State. Instead, Battlegroups are merely "*encouraged* to develop working relationships with relevant (F)HQs," and training *could* culminate in a joint and possibly combined field exercise."<sup>52</sup> The U.S. Army would not put any task force on alert, or much less deploy one, without these simple measures being completed to a set standard.<sup>53</sup>

When rapid reaction units are based on national instead of supranational militaries, politics invariably enters decision-making processes. This can also color international perceptions of the operation. For example, the involvement and leadership of the French in EUFOR TChad/RCA raised eyebrows because France was a former colonial master of the area.<sup>54</sup> The current six-month scheduling system presents another problem that arises when these units are nationality-based. If a situation requiring deployment of a BG arises at or near the rotation date, a Member State that does not necessarily agree to the deployment may attempt political wrangling to either slow down or speed up the rotation process. This may happen for a variety of reasons, such as unwillingness to contribute the additional funds or manpower that a deployment would require, reluctance to deploy countrymen into a specific dangerous situation or if the contributing nation is simply against the Council's decision to act for political reasons.<sup>55</sup>

Moreover, the Battlegroups' ability to provide a rapid response to crises has not been proven. A rapid-reaction force that is unable to take action in a rapid manner is not, to say the least, maximizing its potential. Emergencies within the EU will typically be dealt with by Member States' national security services, reducing the need for a supranational RRF. However, with emergencies outside of the EU, time is usually of the essence. According to EU documents, the Battlegroup on "ready status" has no more than ten days from the time of the EU Council's decision to deploy, after which it must be fully operational within the targeted area (see Figure 3, "Battlegroup Deployment Timeline").<sup>56</sup> This may be sufficient for "slow burn" crises (such as chasing ragtag bands of terrorists in Mali or recent peacekeeping in the former Yugoslavia), but proved inadequate in a number of situations in the past. For instance, a time span of about three days elapsed from the moment Dutch peacekeepers in Srebrenica were first fired upon until Serbs started killing the first "protected" Bosnians.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, the Rwandan genocide took only one day to start, during which time a Belgian UN contingent was butchered and hundreds, if not

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<sup>51</sup> Mittelaer, *Strategic Planning*.

<sup>52</sup> European Union Military Committee, *EU Battlegroup*. (Italics added by author.)

<sup>53</sup> Author's military experience.

<sup>54</sup> Bjoern Siebert, "EUFOR TChad/RCA - A Cautionary Note," *European Security Review* (March 2008).

<sup>55</sup> Lindstrom, "Enter the EU Battlegroups."

<sup>56</sup> This period of ten days is *in addition* to however long the Council takes to reach a decision – potentially days, weeks, or months.

<sup>57</sup> Office of United Nations Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 53/35* (New York: United Nations, 1999), 57-63.

thousands, of Rwandans died.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, evacuations of European civilians from unstable regions occur on an almost annual basis and specialized quick-reaction national military units usually perform these missions, with priority going to their own citizens. It is also essential that these Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) be completed in a matter of hours or days, instead of weeks.

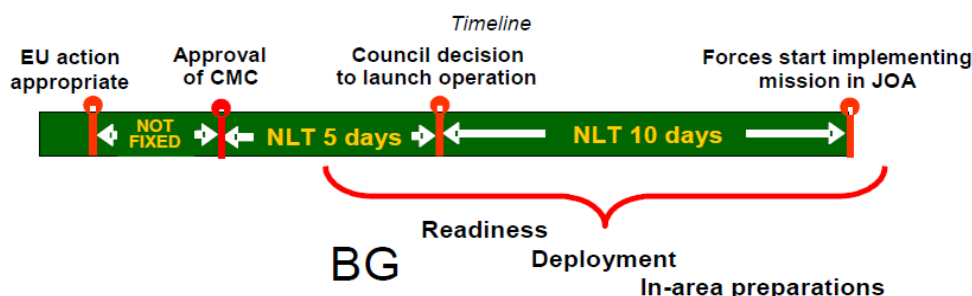


Figure 4: Battlegroup Deployment Timeline<sup>59</sup>

The standard for “ready response forces” in the U.S. Army Ranger Regiment is a three-tier rotation system. One battalion can be on standby to be loaded and in the air on the way to a mission within eighteen hours of notification, while the other two battalions are on 48-hour and one-week notice, respectively.<sup>60</sup> Even larger forces, such as the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, operate under similar procedures.

<b>10 May</b>	UN General Secretary approaches French President regarding possible deployment.
<b>19 May</b>	EU Council requests feasibility study of an EU military op. in the DRC.
<b>20 May</b>	French reconnaissance team visits Bunia.
<b>25 May</b>	USG Guéhenno visits Bunia.
<b>27 May</b>	2nd Special SG report on MONUC – Call for expanded MONUC presence and role, as well as new calls for MNF.
<b>28 May</b>	France announces intention to intervene.
<b>30 May</b>	SCR 1484 authorizes IEMF.
<b>31 May -1 June</b>	Violence between militias results in 350 casualties (mainly civilians).
<b>5 June</b>	EU Council Joint Action (authorizing Artemis and approving logistics).
<b>6 June</b>	First IEMF troops arrive.
<b>12 June</b>	EU Council Decision approves operational plan and launch of IEMF. Security Council mission visits Bunia.
<b>25 June</b>	IEMF declares Bunia a weapons-invisible zone and sets boundaries for militia
<b>1 July</b>	Transitional government installed.
<b>6 July</b>	IEMF forces reach full deployment (three weeks after initial deployment).

Figure 5: Operation Artemis Timeline, May – July 2003<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Associated Press, “Ten Belgian Paratroopers Murdered and Mutilated: Who's to Blame?” (6 April 1997), available at: <http://lubbockonline.com/news/040797/ten.htm> (accessed 7 May 2014).

<sup>59</sup> European Union External Action, “Common Security.”

<sup>60</sup> Author’s recollection from service in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ranger Battalion, 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment, 1992-1994.

<sup>61</sup> Lindstrom, “Enter the EU Battlegroups.”



As we can see from Figure 5, forty-six days elapsed from the time the UN approached France (the only force-generator available and willing to intervene in the Democratic Republic of Congo) and the time when the European military force had enough troops on the ground to affect the situation. With Operation EUFOR TChad/RCA, “the EU took several months to assemble its force, despite the limited timeframe of the operation and its members being among the wealthiest and militarily most capable countries in the world.”<sup>62</sup>

In comparison, Operation Urgent Fury, the 1983 invasion of Grenada by the United States, took nine days to organize and execute a division-sized joint operation in a hostile environment.<sup>63</sup> The 1989 invasion of Panama by the U.S. (another large-scale joint operation involving over 25,000 U.S. personnel) took four days to complete.<sup>64</sup> After the 9/11 attacks, it took the United States 37 days to strike the opposite side of the planet with an over-strength company. The U.S. also sent hundreds of special operations and intelligence personnel to Afghanistan through various means in the same timeframe.<sup>65</sup> In response to an aircraft hijacking in 1976, the Israelis were able to plan, conduct reconnaissance, and insert the equivalent of a mechanized company onto an unlit hostile airfield within a single week for the successful Entebbe raid.<sup>66</sup>

If the EU wishes to develop a response capability that is able to perform at such high standards, some basic assumptions of force structure require a second look. In the author’s view (while mindful of the irony therein), the most conspicuous and potentially catastrophic shortcoming of the Battlegroup concept is precisely the *multinational* concept on which it is based. First, most nations are normally loath to place large numbers of their troops under foreign command and regularly demand caveats regarding how they are to be employed. In the United States’ OEF-A,<sup>67</sup> for instance, the caveats that even NATO members participated with “increase the risk to every service member deployed in Afghanistan and bring increased risk to mission success.”<sup>68</sup> They are also “a detriment to effective command and control, unity of effort and ... command.”<sup>69</sup> Even in NATO, each Member State can decide whether and to what extent to respond militarily to an attack on another member.<sup>70</sup>

Second, and on a more strategic level, Member States may not agree with missions the EU has decided to fulfill. For example, in the run-up to the EUFOR TChad/RCA operation, France was accused of spearheading the mission in its own interests and shoring up the long-term military

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<sup>62</sup> Siebert, “EUFOR TChad.”

<sup>63</sup> Ronald H. Cole, *Operation Urgent Fury, Grenada* (U.S. Office of the JCS, Joint History Office, 1997).

<sup>64</sup> Global Security, *Operation Just Cause* (7 July 2011), available at: [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/just\\_cause.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/just_cause.htm) (accessed 17 December 2013).

<sup>65</sup> Gary C. Schroen, *First In: An Insider's Account of How the CIA Spearheaded the War on Terror in Afghanistan* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press 2005).

<sup>66</sup> Simon Dunston, *Entebbe: The Most Daring Raid of Israel's Special Forces* (New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 2011).

<sup>67</sup> Operation Enduring Freedom, Afghanistan.

<sup>68</sup> Attributed to General John Craddock in Arnaud de Borchave, “Commentary: NATO Caveats,” 10 July 2009, [http://www.UPI.com/emerging\\_threats/2009/07/10/Commentary-NATO-caveats/UPI-47311247244125/](http://www.UPI.com/emerging_threats/2009/07/10/Commentary-NATO-caveats/UPI-47311247244125/), accessed 16 December 2014.

<sup>69</sup> David P. Auerswald and Stephen M. Saideman, *NATO at War: Understanding the Challenges of Caveats in Afghanistan* (Montreal: McGill University, 2009).

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

operation that was already in Chad.<sup>71</sup> Six “force-generation” conferences were required to get Member States to provide enough troops to accomplish such a relatively small operation, in a low-intensity conflict.<sup>72</sup> Another notable example is Germany’s refusal to sign the UN Security Council vote that resulted in the 2011 air campaign in Libya.<sup>73</sup> The problems encountered by the EU in finding a nation to lead the 2006 EUFOR RD Congo operations also “revealed how difficult it could be to organize an EU military mission if no state is willing to bear the main responsibility” of such an undertaking.<sup>74</sup>

More recently, when European experts drew up plans to send a British-led BG into the Central African Republic to reinforce France’s mission in 2013, London balked so vehemently that the request was never officially raised.<sup>75</sup> As perhaps the most egregious example of national interests overriding moral imperative, the Eurocorps stood idly by during the Bosnian genocide, shackled by buck-passing and foot-shuffling by its sponsor nations. This reliance on Member State compliance with EU resolutions now creates a potential reason for BGs to simply refuse an EU-ordered deployment.

Another shortfall is in the ever-sensitive area of finance. Each country in the EU has its domestically acceptable level of defense spending; this issue became especially acute in the wake of the 2008-2009 financial crash. The Battlegroups currently require a lead EU nation or group of nations to put together and bear the financial and manpower burdens. Despite this investment, the Battlegroup does little materially to enhance a Member State’s national defense, especially if it is based beyond the state’s borders.<sup>76</sup> The EU, usually held captive by how much its members want to or are able to spend, is especially powerless in this situation because of the leeway allotted to states with regard to the Battlegroups’ creation and their allowable standards. The BG “generation process is done...normally out of sight of EU bodies.”<sup>77</sup> While the EU is currently debating an expansion of the process that allowed common funding for Operation Althea,<sup>78</sup> the host nations must bear the cost of deploying a BG if it were to occur. This process has a large potential for failure due to the possibility of Member States’ simply refusing to fund a BG at a critical moment. It may be a large part of the reason why there has not been a single BG deployed to date.

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<sup>71</sup> Hainzl and Feichtinger, “EUFOR TChad.”

<sup>72</sup> Niklas Novaky, “Burden-sharing in CDSP Military Operations – A Theoretical Analysis” (working paper London: Kings College, 2011), 13.

<sup>73</sup> Steven Erlanger and Judy Dempsey, “Germany Steps Away From European Unity,” *The New York Times* (23 March 2011), available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/24/world/europe/24germany.html?pagewanted=all> (accessed 7 May 2014).

<sup>74</sup> Giulia Piccolino, “A Litmus Test for the European Union? The EU’s Response to the Crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo from 1996 to the 2006 Elections,” *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 15:1 (2010): 115-136.

<sup>75</sup> Judy Dempsey, “The Depressing Saga of Europe’s Battle Groups,” *Judy Dempsey’s Strategic Europe* (19 December 2013), available at: <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=53975> (accessed 4 June 2014).

<sup>76</sup> Even with the cost savings created by group and joint procurement, fears still persist that the costs of activation of Battlegroups might be high enough that member states “may look for ways to avoid activation of their EU BG during a time of crisis.” Hatzigeorgopoulos, “The Role of EU Battlegroups.”

<sup>77</sup> Lindstrom, “Enter the EU Battlegroups.”

<sup>78</sup> The assumption of military implementation of the Dayton agreement in Bosnia-Herzegovina, by the EU from NATO. European Union External Action, “Althea/BiH,” available at: [http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/althea-bih/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/althea-bih/index_en.htm) (accessed 10 June 2014).

The basis for the EU's Battlegroup concept is sound: a battalion-sized combat team, capable of deploying rapidly and supporting itself for a limited time and performing a variety of missions. The EU has proven it can fairly successfully deploy for short-term missions when one of the larger countries wants to get involved in international crises. However, I hold certain that one long-dead Prussian military theorist rolls over in his grave whenever a new Battlegroup is formed. The shortcomings of the concept generate unnecessary friction and are precisely those aspects that leave a great deal to the whim of the Member States and their willingness to support the Union: national hubris, financial cost and political squabbling. Billions of euros are spent each year by contributing countries on sustaining the Battlegroup concept, but this concept has yet to be tested in combat. To date, it is an untested system with obvious flaws.

## A Possible Solution

Operational doctrine increasingly includes elements of human security... and is rarely matched by strategic narrative. Until it does, the EU's ambition to be seen as a different kind of security actor will not be realized.<sup>79</sup>

A professional, permanent, standing brigade-sized Battlegroup can fill the need for an initial reaction force, which is not yet met by the Eurocorps or the current Battlegroups.<sup>80</sup> This can be done inexpensively, more reliably, with greater flexibility, with greater chances of mission success and with less risk incurred to service members and the international reputation of the EU. Such a brigade could serve as a blueprint for any further enlargement of an EU military, would help unify the shared military industry of Europe and stimulate both the European arms industry and the economy of the region where the brigade is based.<sup>81</sup> Even a relatively small unit, if equipped with the latest technology and manned only by highly motivated soldiers, would be large and capable enough to hold its own against almost all conceivable modern threats.

The brigade should be accountable only to the highest echelons of EU leadership, such as the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (AR/VP).<sup>82</sup> Deployments should only take place under the order of the AR/VP, with a majority of the Commission's Member States in agreement or, failing an order by the AR/VP, by unanimous Member States' consent.<sup>83</sup> A vote to sustain the force past a 90-day window can be taken by the

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<sup>79</sup> Mary Martin and Mary Kaldor, *The European Union and Human Security: External Interventions and Missions*. (Oxford: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>80</sup> None of the EU's deployments have required more than a brigade's strength of troops. See Nick Witney, "Re-energizing Europe's Security and Defence Policy," (29 July 2008), available at: [http://www.elpais.com/elpaismedia/diario/media/200807/29/internacional/20080729elpiint\\_2\\_Pes\\_PDF.pdf](http://www.elpais.com/elpaismedia/diario/media/200807/29/internacional/20080729elpiint_2_Pes_PDF.pdf) (accessed 4 June 2014), 29.

<sup>81</sup> Even this larger brigade form of an RRF would pose no military threat to most of the EU's Member States, allaying possible fears that the EU might use the force against smaller Member States.

<sup>82</sup> This would streamline the lines of communication for command and reporting, bypassing the already bloated command structure the EU has created. The benefits of entrusting the European Commission with decision authority for employment of the brigade, instead of the European Parliament (an unwieldy legislative body of 736 representatives) or the European Council (which only meets 3-4 times a year) are obvious: a more rapid decision-making ability, control of the budget, and direct accountability to Member States through their sole representative commissioners. The Parliament would retain the ability to dismiss the Commission and appoint Commissioners, and the AR/VP must answer to them, both of which make a reasonable "check" on the Commission's military power.

<sup>83</sup> This "vote" of consent could be performed according to the NATO model: the motion carries as long as there are no votes against action (i.e., only favorable votes or abstentions).

Commission after deployment. This would alleviate the wrangling for force generation and allow smaller states to have an equal voice in deployment of the force. Command structures would be based in Brussels, while operational command would remain in the same location as the brigade with a permanent command team, alleviating the need to “re-invent the wheel” after every rotation and before any deployment. Regular training deployments would cement channels of command, reporting, and logistics. With a mix of infantry (both mechanized and airborne), engineer, special operations, and support personnel (medical, CBRN, civil affairs, PSYOPs, etc.), the brigade would be able not only to perform the traditional Battlegroup tasks, but also offer a better response to civil emergencies such as natural or man-made disasters *within* the EU.<sup>84</sup>

It has been demonstrated that the costs for establishing and maintaining a Battlegroup under the current system can be enormous: 600 million U.S. dollars for one battalion for a six-month standby period, to use the Nordic example. This equates to 1.2 billion dollars per year for one battalion and 2.4 billion dollars for two Battlegroups for a year, which is the current standard. According to the U.S. Government Accounting Office, the cost of standing up a U.S. Army Stryker Brigade is approximately 1.5 billion dollars for *five* battalions of modern combat power and their supporting units.<sup>85</sup> It would cost an additional 525 million dollars to construct new facilities for the brigade headquarters, barracks, operational buildings, morale and welfare buildings, as well as housing and schools for family members. These two figures add up to just over 2 billion dollars (for five battalions), still well under the cost of maintaining one year of the Battlegroup readiness posture (with two battalions).

An American heavy brigade costs approximately 360 million dollars a year to operate, which looks like a bargain compared to the 600 million dollars for six months of a single battalion.<sup>86</sup> Of course, if the EU maintains its position that it needs only two battalions of combat power on standby at any given time, the savings could potentially be greater.<sup>87</sup> These savings could then be

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<sup>84</sup> As a signatory to the Charter of the United Nations, forces under order of the UN can be used inside of the EU to deal with emergencies, specifically Article 43 of the UN Charter. United Nations General Assembly, Article 43, Charter of the United Nations, available at: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter7.shtml>.

<sup>85</sup> United States Government Accounting Office, “Military Transformation: Fielding of Army's Stryker Vehicles Is Well Under Way, but Expectations for Their Transportability by C-130 Aircraft Need to Be Clarified,” (Report GAO-04-925, Washington D.C., 12 August 2004).

<sup>86</sup> Lynn E. Davis, J. Michael Polich, et al., *Stretched Thin: Army Forces for Sustained Operations* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2005), 95-96.

<sup>87</sup> The literature is unclear as to whether personnel costs were included in the U.S. Army figures. However, if we hypothesize a high average salary of \$50,000 a year per soldier in this 3500-man brigade, this would add \$175 million to operating costs annually. This totals about \$535 million, which is still well under the price-tag of a modern single Battlegroup. Even adding personnel costs of pensions, medical care, family care, etc., the costs remain lower than the current system. Following this back-of-the-envelope calculation, once the brigade is built, it would cost approximately \$1 billion U.S. dollars for operations, upkeep, personnel, etc. Under the shared-costs model, this is a pittance for trillion dollar economies such as Germany and France.

used for investment in airlift, further reducing the reaction time in a crisis.<sup>88</sup> For cost-sharing, the Union already has in place a system, aptly named “Athena,” spreading military costs commonly across Member States based on gross national income.<sup>89</sup>

Meanwhile, the brigade’s personnel would be recruited from across the EU and subject to a rigorous assessment and selection process.<sup>90</sup> Since the brigade’s missions would most likely be in hostile, austere, and complex environments, both physical stamina and intelligence must be put at a premium. For the same reason, each service member would have to be able to perform “as an infantryman first,” and not just for the specialty for which he or she was hired. As a potential NATO partner force, English skills would also be important (and could be taught as part of training). Relatively high salaries should draw the best recruits. Training would have to be as tough as possible. To this purpose, hiring a veteran cadre expert in special operations and infantry tactics would be one of the primary goals when standing up the brigade.<sup>91</sup>

These practices, if properly executed, will reduce nationalism as a source of friction within the ranks, as well as during deployments.<sup>92</sup> If the brigade were based within an economically struggling Member State, the benefits to the local economy would be considerable. Equipping the force would not only be an economic boost for the nations building the equipment,<sup>93</sup> but would also solidify the European arms industry’s moves towards commonality. Many armored vehicles, such as the Pandur II IFV and the Dingo II IMV,<sup>94</sup> are in production or

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<sup>88</sup> See Lindstrom, “Enter the EU Battlegroups,” 33-41, for an in-depth review of the airlift it takes to move combat power into a theatre. Beyond the usual bureaucratic dithering, transportation was the greatest consumer of time in past EU deployments. For optimal performance, the EU Brigade should have enough organic airlift to drop the airborne infantry battalion in one sortie, and then ferry the heavier elements of the Brigade into theatre as a follow-on force. This would require 8-10 A400 aircraft, at a cost of €150 million apiece (for a total of €1.5 billion or \$2 billion, which is the current annual cost of operating two Battlegroups).

<sup>89</sup> Council of the European Union, “Financing Security and Defence Military Operations.” available at: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/policies/fac/financing-security-and-defence-military-operations-\(athena\)](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/policies/fac/financing-security-and-defence-military-operations-(athena)). (accessed 9 June 2014).

<sup>90</sup> Personnel can also be recruited internationally, bringing in any number of soldiers skilled in languages not normally found in the EU, but in possible future conflict zones and places of interest for the EU. A program of “EU citizenship,” i.e., citizenship of an EU nation, could be used to reward faithful service, much like the systems used in the U.S. and France. Such a system lets potential citizens enter the Union only after “making an investment” in it.

<sup>91</sup> Specialized skills (communications, advanced medical, maintenance, UAV operations, etc.) could be gained through training in Member States (with compatible European equipment), NATO schools (with the appropriate agreements in place), or the civilian contractors through whom the equipment was purchased.

<sup>92</sup> It would be immensely helpful if many senior officers and NCOs of this initial primary brigade staff were combat-experienced officers from non-EU NATO and “Five Eyes” countries, such as the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. This would serve a number of purposes: 1) reduce any hints of favoritism among personnel in selection and training of the fledgling organization, 2) incorporate knowledge gained from the worst fighting of the recent Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, 3) forge relations with those nations that are the brigade’s most likely allies, and, most importantly, 4) insulate the brigade from political interference between Member States.

<sup>93</sup> At approximately 80-100 armored vehicles per mechanized battalion, and two armored, one engineer, and one support battalion, this could equal up to 250 armored IFV-type vehicles (Pandur II or the like). If the paratroop and SOF battalions are also to be provided with the infantry mobility vehicles (IMV, i.e., the Dingo II) that are essential in modern warfare (at least 200 vehicles in total for the two battalions), this equals a substantial production line and subsequent economic boost for a smaller EU nation.

<sup>94</sup> The IFV (Infantry Fighting Vehicle) would form the primary platform of the brigade’s armored battalions, akin to a U.S. Stryker Brigade, with anti-tank, anti-aircraft, indirect fire, medical, command, etc., variants of the vehicle incorporated into them. The IMV (Infantry Mobility Vehicle) would provide long-distance mobility and IED/ambush protection for the airborne and SOF battalions and headquarters elements.



were designed in Europe, and already meet the requirements of such a brigade: highly mobile, protected from improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and transportable by aircraft. The same can be said of equipment, such as weapons, radios, computers, etc. Since the brigade would “belong” to the entire EU, it could serve as a starting point for long-awaited standardization of such military equipment across the Union.

The understandable reluctance of Member States to place personnel under the command of another nation is a thorny issue, but is one with which they already deal on a daily basis. Nationals from every Member State are seconded to the EU for every purpose. Administrative, logistical, and management functions of the Union are performed by people from across the region, not to mention the diplomats, security, police, and military personnel that already operate under various commanders and managers on almost every continent, and in potentially hazardous situations.<sup>95</sup> The current Battlegroups themselves operate under the command of the lead or sponsor nations, with the implicit understanding that they would potentially conduct operations in a hostile environment under the command of the EU Operations Center. While this current system would be a substantial risk to current Battlegroups, it demonstrates that national hubris can be overcome.

An EU Brigade would offer a number of additional advantages. For instance, Member States’ national caveats and restrictions regarding the use of military forces would be immaterial to it. This fact gives the RRF an operational flexibility that is unmatched within Europe’s current militaries, while still giving Member States a say in its employment. This supranational unit would also lend operational flexibility to countries whose national laws restrict deployment of national military forces, such as Germany. In addition, use of the brigade in such an emergency would incur no extra cost to that nation.

This is undoubtedly an American-style approach to a classic European problem. While the United States arguably has the premier military in the world, there is no reason to believe an entity as powerful as the EU could not field a comparable capability on a smaller scale, in order to achieve a more rapid response to crisis situations.

Such a capability could replace the unused, risky, and unwieldy Battlegroup concept, deal quickly with minor crises, or take on the role of a “bridging force,” acting as a stopgap in major emergencies until a larger European Rapid Reaction Force, the UN, or a Member State’s national military is able to assemble and deploy.

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<sup>95</sup> Witney, “Re-energizing Europe's Security,” 29.

## Conclusion

Our traditional concept of self-defence – up to and including the Cold War – was based on the threat of invasion. With the new threats, the first line of defence will often be abroad.

— *European Security Strategy, 2003*

Recent world events have demonstrated that European soft power has limitations. Within the EU's sphere of influence, problems remain that have proven impervious to financial aid and missions of goodwill. The Middle East remains dangerously unstable. Africa shows signs of economic and political improvement, but the security situation remains neglected and precarious.<sup>96</sup> Natural disasters (in the form of major flooding) overwhelmed civil authorities in Germany (the EU economic powerhouse), Austria, and Serbia (an EU neighbor and membership candidate).<sup>97</sup> Military strength is sometimes required in order to supplement civil authorities and protect civilians' and national interests. The Union is the perfect vehicle with which to provide such a military capability.

Since the earliest days of the EU and in the yearly meetings of the EU Council, Member States have agreed that the Union requires the capability to militarily respond to emergencies within its territory and across the globe. The Union has since constructed a solid foundation on which to build a military: a leadership structure, military staff and educational institutions, as well as a strong economy. Consequently, conditions are ripe for creation of an RRF that could rapidly respond to any of the potential crises identified within the Union's policies and the Petersberg Tasks. This force will only work if its creation is organized by unbiased and competent military experts who can put national interests aside, if these experts are protected from above from political interference, and if the effort is fully supported by Union leadership.

This new, professional, *supranational* EU Brigade would drastically reduce the problems of the current ad hoc system of the EU military, as well as reduce the chance of the current Battlegroups deploying into a costly, bloody, and very public military failure. Cheaper, more agile, more flexible, not directly bound by national will or politics of Member States, and manned by well-trained and highly motivated "citizens of the EU," the EU Brigade would provide the Union with another tool of foreign policy, and help fulfill the vision of becoming the "humanitarian superpower." With such a brigade, the EU would be much better prepared to offer a rapid and effective response to the challenges of an uncertain twenty-first century.

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<sup>96</sup> Michela Wrong, "Why Are Africa's Militaries so Disappointingly Bad?" *Foreign Policy*, (6 June 2014), available at: [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/06/06/why\\_are\\_africa\\_s\\_militaries\\_so\\_disappointingly\\_bad\\_kenya\\_nigeria\\_boko\\_haram\\_al\\_shabab](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/06/06/why_are_africa_s_militaries_so_disappointingly_bad_kenya_nigeria_boko_haram_al_shabab) (accessed 9 June 2014).

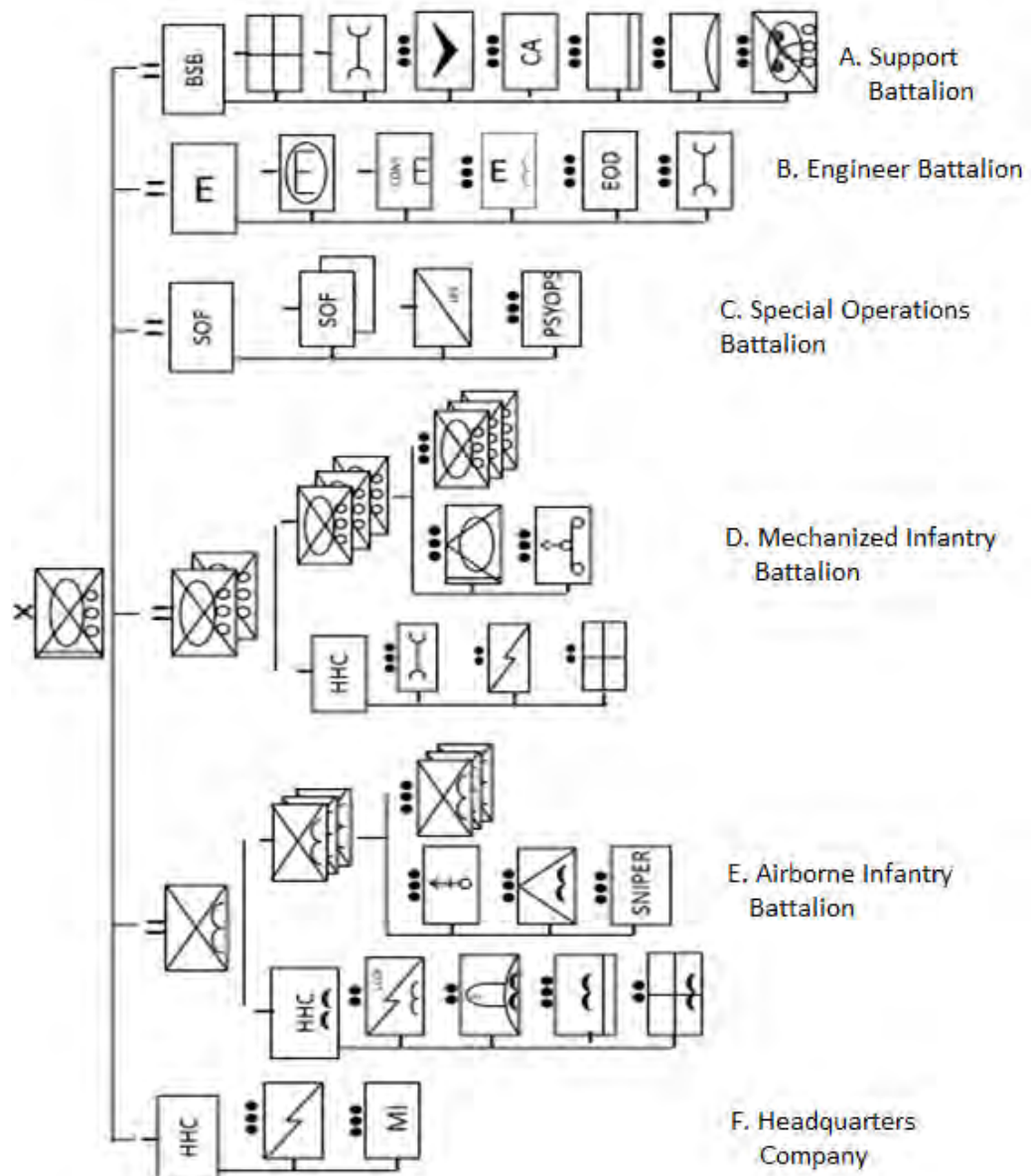
<sup>97</sup> "Martial Law over Flood in Germany. Military Is Deploying In 3 States By Now," *Investment Watch* (3 June 2013), available at: <http://investmentwatchblog.com/breaking-martial-law-over-flood-in-germany-military-is-deploying-in-3-states-by-now/> (accessed 9 June 2013).

**Appendix A** (For diagram of this proposal, please see EU Brigade Organizational Chart on the following page.)

The EU Brigade would be composed of six battalions and a headquarters company.

- A. ***Brigade Support Battalion***. Consists of the major supporting elements required for day-to-day operation of the brigade, as well as important “niche” capabilities, which make the Brigade generally self-sufficient. Units here would be modular and deployable as needed to support operations; most would also be airborne-capable. Composed of a medical company, a maintenance company, as well as platoons for unmanned aerial vehicles, civil affairs, supply, anti-air, and CBRN.
- B. ***Engineer Battalion***. Provides construction, excavation, and sapper capability to the Brigade. Heavy equipment companies can respond to natural disasters, as well as assist in humanitarian responses. Combat engineer units are multi-purpose assets that are critical in high-intensity conflict; explosive ordinance disposal (EOD) personnel have been essential in all recent conflicts. A maintenance platoon provides specialized work on the battalion’s equipment.
- C. ***Special Operations Forces Battalion***. Modeled after U.S. Special Forces and British SAS, this unit provides EU planners a smaller-scale capability for intervention: highly-trained operators versed in counter-insurgency and low-intensity conflict, in operations such as hostage rescue, non-combatant evacuation, or in crises where a larger force has been deemed undesirable. Personnel from the long-range reconnaissance and surveillance (LRS) company would be the first “eyes on the ground” for EU and Brigade planners in a crisis area. A psychological operations (now known as “information operations,” due to the politically-charged term of PSYOPS) platoon has the capability to provide media broadcasts and distribute literature in support of the Brigade’s mission.
- D. ***Mechanized Infantry Battalion***. This is the basis of the Brigade. Highly mobile and survivable vehicles provide highly-trained soldiers rapid access to conflict areas, protection from fire and the now-ubiquitous IEDs, and firepower substantial enough to deter aggression. Anti-tank and heavy mortar platoons make the battalions a potent force even against an adversary equipped with high-end military hardware. A headquarters company with command, maintenance, medical, and communications capabilities will make the battalion deployable as a stand-alone unit.
- E. ***Airborne Battalion***. Composed of three light companies of paratroopers and air-droppable equipment, this unit would be the most likely initial-entry force into a crisis situation and could be self-sufficient while supplied from the air, or until heavier forces arrive.
- F. ***Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC)***. Provides the resources need to direct the Brigade through daily and deployment operations. With integral communications and intelligence capabilities, this unit is the link between the Brigade’s battalions and the Brigade commander, as well as links with EU leadership.

## Appendix A, EU Brigade Organizational Chart



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