

GUE/NGL Group Meeting / Esko Seppänen 17.9.2003

The *Helsinki summit* of December 1999 marked the decisive launch of the militarisation of the EU in practice. It was decided to create military institutions in the EU structures and to equip common crisis management units: a Euroarmy.

EU leaders expressed their 'determination to develop an autonomous capacity to take decisions and, where NATO as a whole is not engaged, to launch and conduct EU-led military operations in response to international crises'.

EU-led crisis management operations are carried out 'with or without recourse to NATO assets and capabilities', but at the same time 'avoid unnecessary duplication' (with NATO operations). Attention was also drawn to NATO's Washington decision, according to which non-EU members of NATO and other interested countries may participate in EU crisis management. NATO member countries committed themselves to using NATO's joint defence planning bodies to coordinate their actions, and non-NATO countries were encouraged to act according to the PARP process of the Partnership for Peace programme.

In Helsinki the Member States committed themselves to being able to assemble by 2003 a military force of 50 000 - 60 000 within 60 days and to maintain it for a minimum of a year. This force would be able to carry out all the Petersberg tasks, and this goal is known as the *Helsinki Headline Goal* (HHG).

Where did the figure of 50 000 - 60 000 come from?

EU Member States have around two million soldiers at arms. Of these, however, only one tenth are trained and equipped so that they can be used in international (crisis management) tasks. Of these 200 000 qualified troops, only around 50 000 can be deployed at short notice. Thus the number of Eurotroops available for crisis management tasks was dictated by the total number of

troops available. In reality the Euroarmy is a force of 200 000 troops.

Since the Helsinki headline goal (HHG) states that troops should be maintained in combat readiness for a year, back-up and replacement troops are needed for less rapid deployment. Since the assumption is that over a one-year period a brigade is in the field, on maintenance duty and on stand-by for four months at a time, the HHG requirement of a force of 50 000 - 60 000 troops in the field for a year actually entails an army of 200 000.

In the same context the first military bodies were established within EU structures and the Council's hierarchy: the Political and Security Committee, the Military Committee and the Military Staff, to which missions formerly performed by the WEU, which had operated outside the EU, were transferred.

Common defence

The Constitution unambiguously states that a common defence is an objective of the EU:

'2. The common security and defence policy shall include the progressive framing of a common Union defence policy. This will lead to a common defence, when the European Council, acting unanimously, so decides. It shall in that case recommend to the Member States the adoption of such a decision in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements.'

Before such time, countries may engage in 'structured cooperation' in the field of defence within the structures of the EU.

This is the kind of military cooperation which Germany, France, Belgium and Luxembourg recommended to the other EU countries at the end of April: a particular group of countries could institute their own military structures within EU structures, with provision for a military command and staff.

The reason adduced for this is that without military force the EU is not a credible operator in global politics. The aim is to militarise the EU even though not all Member States so desire or will participate in military cooperation.

A new concept: structured cooperation

The Constitution introduces a new concept: 'structured cooperation' (Part I, Article 40(6)):

'Those Member States whose military capabilities fulfil higher criteria and which have made more binding commitments to one another in this area with a view to the most demanding missions shall establish structured cooperation within the Union framework. Such cooperation shall be governed by the provisions of Article III-213.'

Article 213 reads as follows:

'1. The Member States listed in the Protocol [title], which fulfil higher military capability criteria and wish to enter into more binding commitments in this matter with a view to the most demanding tasks, hereby establish structured cooperation between themselves within the meaning of Article I-40(6). The military capability criteria and commitments which those Member States have defined are set out in that Protocol.'

On the basis of this article, certain EU countries may engage in structured military cooperation within the EU. Structured cooperation (Part I, Article 40(6)) is governed by different provisions to 'enhanced cooperation' (Part I, Article 43). Structured cooperation may be initiated by a smaller group of Member States than enhanced cooperation, and such a group may itself adopt criteria relating to armed forces (on the same basis as the convergence criteria were adopted for Economic and Monetary Union) applicable to Member States that wish to join in later.

Those countries which are the founding fathers of structured cooperation may then decide (Part III, Article 213(2)) on the inclusion in the EU's military nucleus of countries which seek to join it later:

'2. If a Member State wishes to participate in such cooperation at a later stage, and thus subscribe to the obligations it imposes, it shall inform the European Council of its intention. The Council of Ministers shall deliberate at the request of that Member State. Only the members of the Council of Ministers that represent the Member States taking part in structured cooperation shall participate in the vote.'

The countries participating in structured cooperation may use their joint military forces to carry out operations on behalf of the whole EU if the Member States - unanimously - authorise them to act on behalf of the whole EU (Part III, Article 213(4)):

'4. The Council of Ministers may ask the Member States participating in such cooperation to carry out at Union level a task referred to in Article III-210.'

Such a task may also include peace-making without the authorisation of the UN. The Convention did not incorporate in the Constitution any clause requiring EU operations always to have a UN mandate. At the same time it has become clear that there is no intention of setting any geographical limits to the forces' operations.

Part III, Article 210, extends the so-called Petersberg tasks to include 'joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks, tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking and post-conflict stabilisation. All these tasks may contribute to the fight against terrorism, including by supporting third countries in combating terrorism in their territories.'

The 'solidarity clause' (Part I, Article 42) has the aim not only of preventing terrorism but also of preventing 'the terrorist threat' in the territory of the Member States.

As a concept for inclusion in a constitution, 'preventing the terrorist threat' is very open to interpretation, and it gives the political elite of the Member States very wide powers to order military operations. The terrorist threat was also being fought in Iraq.

Declaration to be attached to the Constitution

Various defensive and offensive operations may be conducted by way of structured cooperation, but this is a different matter from regional (NATO) defence. The EU's NATO member states defend their regions against possible foreign aggressors under the leadership and command of NATO.

Part I, Article 40(7) indicates that the EU is to be turned into a military alliance:

'7. Until such time as the European Council has acted in accordance with paragraph 2 of this Article, closer cooperation shall be established, in the Union framework, as regards mutual defence. Under this cooperation, if one of the Member States participating in such cooperation is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other participating States shall give it aid and assistance by all the means in their power, military or other, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. In the execution of closer cooperation on mutual defence, the participating Member States shall work in close cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. The detailed arrangements for participation in this cooperation and its operation, and the relevant decision-making procedures, are set out in Article III-214.'

Part III, Article 214(1), which is mentioned here, reads as follows:

'1. The closer cooperation on mutual defence provided for in Article I-40(7) shall be open to all Member States of the Union. A list of Member States participating in closer cooperation shall be set out in the declaration [title]. If a Member State wishes to take part in such cooperation at a later stage, and thus accept the obligations it imposes, it shall inform the European Council of its intention and shall subscribe to that declaration.'

This closer cooperation, which entails mutual security guarantees, was justified in papers produced by the Praesidium of the Convention by stating that by means of it those Member States which so desired would be able to uphold the undertakings they had already given under Article V of the Brussels Treaty.

Article V is the *collective defence* clause of the Western European Union (WEU), under which the USA too would automatically be expected to act on its pledge to guarantee others' security. Consequently the USA is likely to demand that all these countries join NATO.

The article's compatibility with NATO is further confirmed by the following clause (Part III, Article 214(4)):

'4. This Article shall not affect the rights and obligations resulting, for the Member States concerned, from the North Atlantic Treaty.'

The comparable compatibility of Eurodefence with NATO structures is also provided for in Part I, Article 40(2):

'The policy of the Union in accordance with this Article shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States and shall respect the obligations of certain Member States, which see their common defence realised in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, under the North Atlantic Treaty, and be compatible with the common security and defence policy established within that framework.'

Non-aligned status in danger

If a country signs a declaration pursuant to Part III, Article 214, it will not be non-aligned.

Thus the EU Constitution also calls into question the basis of the foreign policy of the six EU Member States which do not belong to any military alliance: should they remain non-aligned or should they join NATO via the EU? The aim of the EU's NATO members is to ensure that all EU Member States also join NATO.

All in all, the articles of the EU Constitution which entail militarisation will not have the effect of creating a separate, NATO-free defence for the EU. Military cooperation within EU structures will reinforce NATO's military dominance in continental Eurasia and pave the way for EU military crisis management operations which may also include peace-making and war, even in areas far beyond the EU's borders.

The EU is preparing to join in a battle for non-renewable natural resources as part of US-led NATO forces.

At the Intergovernmental Conference, an effort should be made to prevent the EU from being militarised in the way described here. However, this will be difficult, as the large Member States have agreed on the above articles and seem likely to adhere strenuously to their agreement.