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THE AGENCE EUROPE BULLETIN ON CSDP AND NATO

EU/YEMEN: EU WELCOMES ANNOUNCEMENT OF TALKS BETWEEN YEMENI PARTIES IN GENEVA

Brussels, 10/06/2015 (EDD) – On Tuesday 9 June, the EU hailed the United Nations' announcement that the main Yemeni parties had agreed to attend talks in Geneva, on 14 June. *“This positive step has the potential to put a broad-based political settlement back at the centre of international efforts to reach a sustainable solution to the current crisis in Yemen following the conference held in Riyadh on 17-19 May. The EU fully supports the efforts of UN Special Envoy for Yemen Ismail Ould Sheikh Ahmed to resume inclusive political negotiations in accordance with the GCC initiative, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and relevant UN Security Council resolutions. If all the parties engage without preconditions and in good faith, the Geneva talks can be a milestone on the path towards a political solution. The talks will also be key for the swift resumption of a predictable and sustainable humanitarian ceasefire, and the urgent delivery of humanitarian assistance according to the principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence”*, reads a press release from the spokesperson of EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

EU/MEDITERRANEAN: 10/06/2015 (EDD) – On Tuesday 9 June, the Political and Security Committee answered one of the main questions still outstanding regarding the future naval operation in the Mediterranean for combating migrant smuggling (see EDD 801). European Union member state representatives confirmed the principle of “non refoulement” of migrants who would be looked after, mainly during rescue operations at sea but also, when necessary, during inspection and boarding operations of suspect craft by ships taking part in the European military operation. They also agreed that these are the same rules as for Operation Triton, which will apply with regard to the disembarkation of migrants. Landing, therefore, will in principle take place in Italy or, in the event of emergency and close proximity, Malta. The coordination of these rescue and landing activities will be supported by the Frontex agency. This point was added to the agenda of Tuesday's meeting at the request of General Patrick de Rousiers, Military Committee Chairman, in order to facilitate the planning of the operation and force generation. Uncertainty with regard to the taking-in of migrants may well have weighed upon the level of participation by national navies in the future EUNAVFOR Mediterranean operation, especially for those member states that are not Mediterranean rim countries.

NATO/MONTENEGRO: 10/06/2015 (EDD) – NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg was in Montenegro on Wednesday 10 June for a two-day visit. While there he is to meet with President Filip Vujanovic, Parliament President Ranko Krivokapic, Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic, Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration Igor Luksic, as well as Defence Minister Milica Pejanovic Djuriscic. Early in December, allied foreign ministers are due to take the decision as to whether Montenegro should be invited to become a member of NATO.

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Carte blanche

Permanent structured cooperation and the multinational corps

By Karl von Wogau*

The future European Defence Union should be built around the already existing multinational corps in Strasbourg, Stettin and Münster. The former, known as Eurocorps, comprises forces from France, Germany, Belgium, Spain and Luxembourg, and is devoted to the European Union as well as NATO missions. The Northeast corps in Stettin brings together military from Germany, Poland and Denmark and is affiliated to NATO. In Münster, the German Dutch army corps is also qualified as high readiness forces headquarters for NATO. All these military structures have demonstrated their value in developing multinational culture, training and interoperability, but their capabilities have not yet been used in an adequate way to the benefit of the European Union.

A major new step towards a common defence, as envisaged in the treaty, requires strong political will and a real change in mindset. There is little chance of achieving such a result at 27. One should therefore consider the possibility of starting with a smaller group of member states, bearing in mind that it will remain open to newcomers whenever they are willing and able to join the pioneers. This, of course, is exactly what the treaty has foreseen with the establishment of so-called permanent structured cooperation. The multinational corps should be the visible nucleus of this cooperation.

Progress in the European Union has always been made around visible symbols: the internal market around the open borders and monetary union around the euro. A permanent structured cooperation without a visible goal would be like Hamlet without the Prince. Therefore the multinational corps and the development of their capabilities should be at the centre of our future efforts.

The recently discussed idea to develop capabilities around Germany, France and possibly other nations developing all the necessary capabilities for autonomous action while giving smaller nations the possibility to join their efforts with them (“Anlehnungspartnerschaften”) would in reality be a step backwards. It is an illusion to think that one of the European nations alone would be able to develop these all-round capabilities and it would lead away from the necessary common European effort.

We have to accept that the Common Security and Defence Policy will be developed at two speeds. However, there are many useful things that can be agreed upon by all the Member States including Great Britain. As an example, I would mention the development of an internal market for defence goods. We have seen that the European legislation concerning defence procurement and the transfer of defence goods between member states was passed with the agreement of the United Kingdom.

Other projects like the Eurodrone go forward on the basis of agreements between member states. But we have to avoid the error that they can be run without the involvement of Europe. The national administrations are not very keen to involve the European institutions in projects concerning defence equipment. But the defence administration of Germany had to learn at great cost that it is not possible to use drones like the Eurohawk in European airspace without involving the European authorities from the beginning.

Therefore, the European Union should concentrate its efforts on projects where the utilisation of the instruments of the European Union is not only useful but absolutely necessary. This concerns the certification of drones and their admission to the European airspace as well as the security aspects of European projects concerning satellite navigation, observation and telecommunication. Such projects as Galileo, Copernicus and others can be financed by the budget of the European Union.

From one meeting of the European Council to the next, further progress can be achieved on standardisation, certification, space assets, security of supply, research and the so called pooling and sharing projects. However, we have to move beyond this step-by-step approach and pave the way to more substantial and long term cooperation. In other terms, we need to reflect on how to go forward with a permanent structured cooperation covering all aspects of capability planning, development and acquisition. The multinational corps would fit perfectly in this framework and could thus be adapted to the current far more demanding security environment that requires robust, agile and rapidly deployable forces for territorial defence, in application of mutual assistance and full complementarity with NATO, as well as the full spectrum of crisis management.

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EU/RUSSIA: EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CALLS FOR EU RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA TO BE REVIEWED

Brussels, 10/06/20150 (EDD) – On Wednesday 10 June, the European Parliament called on the European Union to “*critically reassess its relations with Russia*”, with adoption of the report by Gabrielius Landsbergis (EPP, Lithuania) on the state of relations between the EU and Russia. Although the Landsbergis report received sweeping support with 494 votes in favour, 135 against and 69 abstentions, the vote confirms that there is a clear line of division between the political groups: the EPP, ALDE, S&D and Greens Groups supported the resolution whereas the EFDD, GUE and Non-Attached Groups - essentially far right - voted against.

According to Parliament, the Union cannot contemplate resuming normal relations with Russia and the latter can no longer be “*treated or considered*” a “*strategic partner*”. Although a very large majority of MEPs were in favour of withdrawing this “*status*” during voting (500 votes for, 119 against and 75 abstentions), the Non-Attached, EFDD and GUE were opposed. The Parliament explained: “*Relations between the EU and Russia must henceforth be based on respect of international law and on dialogue, within which the EU would be willing to resume and rekindle cooperation with the Russian authorities in a certain number of specific fields presenting a common interest*”. Resumption of cooperation is, however, subject to many conditions being fulfilled, including respect by Russia of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, “*including Crimea*” – a detail that, once again, was not backed by the far right and other populists, the radical left and the EFDD.

The part of the resolution bearing on the funding of the political parties of the European Union by foreign sources (the French National Front in particular enjoys major funding of Russian origin) was made weaker with the approval of all, apart from the EFDD which showed considerable internal division (17 for the oral amendment and 23 against). While the rapporteur hoped that MEPs would call on the European Commission to propose legislation banning the funding of EU political parties by political and economic actors from outside the Union, MEPs finally decided that the Commission should propose legislation to ensure “*full transparency of political funding and the funding of political parties within the EU in connection with the recommendation of the Council of Europe regarding, in particular, economic and political stakeholders outside the EU*”.

“*What is most important in relations with Russia is coherence, constancy in our action and the fact of being united*”, explained Polish MEP Jacek Saryusz-Wolski on behalf of the EPP when taking the floor during the plenary debate on Tuesday 9 June. He went on to underline that, in the current context, “*sanctions are the best response to Russia’s aggressive policy*”. “*The S&D hopes to strengthen dialogue and diplomacy including parliamentary diplomacy*”, explained Liisa Jaakonsaari of Finland for that group. While underlining that sanctions remain essential and that, where necessary, it is possible to step up those sanctions, she said that “*if we continue to point a finger of blame at each other, if we do not open up new perspectives, then the spiral will only grow worse*”. “*The key will again be compliance with international law by Russia*”, said Dutch Liberal Johannes Van Baalen, who insisted on restoring Crimea to Ukraine and on effective implementation of the Minsk agreements. Ana Fotyga, Polish Conservative, took up saying: “*We must be tough with Putin but it is necessary to continue cooperating with Russia’s civil society: many Russians want peace. That will take a long time. (...) We must be tough, not give way and let time do its work*”. In response to this, Rebecca Harms, German Green member, said: “*It is very important that there should be a change in the situation and that one should note the importance of ‘soft power’ without engaging in a policy of power*”. “*A diplomatic solution based on ‘soft power’ is needed but not said*”, confirmed Fabio Castaldo of Italy speaking on behalf of the EFDD. He, too, called for an end to “*opportunistic application*” of EU foreign policy “*in relation to realpolitik and the political challenges to be met*”.

The GUE and Non-Attached Groups for their part demonstrated their opposition to the Landsbergis report. “*EU/Russia relations have been paralysed for some time. In order to change the process, it is necessary to have trust rather than power policy, empathy rather than political fumigation and a form of cooperation rather than escalation or a form of exclusion*”, said German Die Linke member Helmut Scholz, who deplored the fact that the report “*does not seek a solution or a way of overcoming the impasse but rather seeks to discipline a government*”. Aymeric Chauprade, who belongs to the French National Front, equated MEPs who support sanctions policy against Russia with warmongers.

NATO/DEFENCE: NATO TESTS NEW TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Brussels, 19/06/2015 (EDD) – NATO is to put to the test some 50 new pieces of equipment in order to improve the energy efficiency of its armed forces during its exercise *Capable Logistician 2015*, which is to be conducted in Hungary from 8 to 19 June at the Bakony combat training centre near Veszprem. For the very first time, the principle of “*smart energy*” is being applied to several logistic units, and private actors are participating in a fully integrated way.

During the exercise, which involves 1,700 troops, NATO will be testing a “*range of energy-efficient solutions in an effort to cut cost*”, a press release states. Such solutions, which are provided by 14 private companies and two public bodies, and which are mainly related to technologies such as electricity microgrids intended to improve the energy management of a camp (an IT system is responsible for optimal management of energy from different sources), renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar power, thermal insulation, low-energy consumption water purification technologies, LED lighting, and small portable fuel cells for soldiers.

One of the aims of the exercise is to validate technologies so that fuel consumption of troops deployed in the context of military operations can be reduced. The exercise in Hungary will thus seek to confirm recent experiments demonstrating that, by using electricity micro-grids for energy management, diesel consumption can be reduced by over 50%. The exercise is based on various scenarios mainly consisting of reacting to power cuts, water and diesel consumption and generator breakdowns. Some 30 experts from defence bodies and research institutes are taking part through workshops as part of the NATO programme for science in the service of peace and security.

NATO/DEFENCE: 10/06/2015 (EDD) – With a view to taking part in NATO exercises, the United States deployed in the United Kingdom (at RAF Fairford) three long range subsonic jet-powered strategic bombers B-52 on Friday 5 June and then two stealth bombers B-2 Spirit on Sunday 7 June. The latter – on a rare visit to Europe - carried out rapid delivery exercises with engines ignited. The aim is to demonstrate the “*ability of the aircraft to forward deploy and deliver conventional and nuclear deterrence anytime and anywhere*”, a press release from the US Air Force states. The B-52 are taking part in exercises launched on Europe’s eastern flank (see EDD 800), BALTOPS in the Baltic Sea and Saber Strike 15 in Poland and in the Baltic States, in order to demonstrate the “*United States’ long-range global strike capability*”.

NATO/UNITED KINGDOM: 10/06/2015 (EDD) – The United Kingdom is to deploy 500 more troops than initially planned for the very high readiness joint task force (VJTF) of NATO’s rapid response force (NRF) as of 2016, bringing the British contribution to 3,000 strong, Defence Secretary Michael Fallon announced on Monday 8 June. “*These additional 500 troops show our commitment to the Task Force and our leadership within the Alliance. We’re putting our most experienced and capable troops at the heart of NATO’s collective defence*”, Fallon told the British parliament. “*Good progress is being made in getting the new Task Force ready to operate next year. The UK is contributing a full battlegroup to the Spanish-led VJTF and we will lead the fully operational force in 2017*”, he added. The United Kingdom has already contributed to the interim VJTF with infantry units, armoured units, artillery and engineering regiments.

RUSSIA/EGYPT: 10/06/2015 (EDD) – On Wednesday 10 June, Russia and Egypt began joint naval military exercises in the Mediterranean Sea. The exercises will be conducted until Sunday, the Russian navy announced. “*This morning, Russian and Egyptian navy vessels (...) left the port of Alexandria*”, Captain Viatcheslav Troukhatchev, spokesman for the Russian Black Sea fleet, told Russian press agencies. “*During coming days, ships of both fleets will carry out exercises on anti-air defence, the search and rescue of boats in difficulty and the search for suspect ships*”, he explained, according to AFP. The Moskva guided-missile cruiser, the flagship of the Russian Black Sea fleet, is taking part in the exercises, as well as a landing ship, a missile launcher ship and a refuelling tanker ship. The naval exercises, called the “*Bridge of Friendship 2015*” are the first joint military exercises between Russia and Egypt.

GERMANY/DEFENCE: GERMANY CONTEMPLATES ACQUISITION OF MEADS AIR DEFENCE MISSILES

Brussels, 10/06/2015 (EDD) – According to an official announcement issued in Berlin on Tuesday 9 June, Germany may become the first country to procure a Medium Extended Air Defence System (MEADS) built by the European missile manufacturer MBDO and American Lockheed Martin. The purchase decision is not yet final as negotiation is still pending but the value of the contract is already estimated at €3-4 billion.

At the end of the day, Berlin did not make the same choice as Warsaw. The Polish government had in fact announced, end April, that it wanted to acquire eight Patriot missile batteries from the American company Raytheon (see *EDD* 788). The US company had also proposed its upgraded Patriot missiles to Germany to replace the Patriot missiles currently held by the Bundeswehr. With the announcement that MBDA – a consortium of Airbus Group, Finmeccanica and BAE Systems - had been chosen, Berlin can now open the exclusive negotiation phase to move on from the development phase to the industrialisation phase.

The MEADS system was initially intended to replace the Patriot missiles. The project was jointly launched in 2004 by the United States, Italy and Germany, which have invested around €4 billion, with a special NATO agency (NAMEADSMA) as manager. In 2012, Washington nonetheless withdrew from the project evoking the need to make cuts in its defence budget. The MEADS system has still never found a buyer but Germany, Italy and even the Netherlands – which also has Patriot missiles – could make the same procurement choice, some sources say. Italy, however, also has a commitment with France in the Samp/T programme.

Welcoming Berlin's decision, Lockheed Martin prided itself in the qualities of the system that it is developing in common: *“MEADS became the first air and missile defence system to demonstrate a dual intercept of targets attacking simultaneously from opposite directions. MEADS is designed to significantly reduce operation and support costs by covering a larger area with less manpower and equipment, and less demand on airlift. Once in theatre, MEADS elements emplace more quickly and can be repositioned without shutting the system down”*.

Germany's Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen said on Tuesday that Germany is planning to set in place controls and well-defined benchmarks for acquisition implementation. If the MBDA group is not able to attain its objectives, Germany could still cancel the contract and opt for Patriots by Raytheon, she said, as reported by *Reuters*. Von der Leyen also answered criticism that has been voiced in Germany on the subject of the MEADS' reliability and the financial cost of the acquisition.

NATO/RUSSIA/UKRAINE: WESTERN PUBLIC OPINION REMAINS LARGELY PACIFIST

Brussels, 10/06/2015 (EDD) – A majority of citizens in eight NATO countries are hostile to sending arms to Ukraine to combat pro-Russia separatists, despite the fact that those same public opinions consider Russia is the party mainly responsible for the conflict that is tearing eastern Ukraine apart, according to a study published on Wednesday 10 June.

According to the results of a far-reaching survey carried out by the US institute, Pew Research Centre, a majority of respondents also consider that NATO should not have recourse to military force in the event of a Russian attack against another member state of the organisation. Forty-eight percent of those taking part in the survey in the eight (out of 28) countries that were the subject of the study are in favour of using force in application of Article 5, while 42% are against a military response to defend an allied country. It comes as no surprise that the highest rate of opinion in favour of applying Article 5 is to be found in the United States (56%) and the lowest in Germany (38%).

According to a median figure, only 41% of respondents in the eight countries concerned (United States, Canada, Italy, France, United Kingdom, Germany, Spain and Poland) are in favour of NATO providing weapons to the Ukrainian government forces. Seventy percent of respondents prefer to grant western economic aid to Ukraine. Fifty percent of Polish, 46% American and 40% French respondents are in favour of sending defensive equipment to Kiev. Only 19% in Germany and 22% in Italy share that view.

According to findings of the same survey, 57% of the citizens in the countries concerned are in favour of Ukraine joining the organisation. Half of those questioned are in favour of Ukraine one day becoming a member of the European Union.

In addition to the first part of this vast survey devoted to the eight countries of NATO, two other chapters probe public opinion in Ukraine and Russia, *AFP* points out. The survey was carried out in these ten countries among 11,116 adults who answered questions put to them by phone or in person between 6 April and 15 May, according to the Pew Research Centre.