

Outline of Lieutenant General WEIGT's address to the Kangaroo Group's Lunch Debate

24th APR 2018 - BRUSSELS

Pronounced under the Chatham House rules, this address only reflects personal views and opinions and do not portray any official political or military considerations from any EU Member State.

LTG WEIGT warmly thanks the President of the Kangaroo Group for having invited him as a speaker and thanks the audience for the appreciated attendance to the debate.

INTRODUCTION:

The purpose is to address personal thoughts, ideas and maybe visions based on personal assessments or assumptions. The debate is understood as an exchange of thoughts without any preliminary consultation with political / military heads in the capitals.

The address is to be mile-stoned by the following logical set of questions, acknowledging and assessing the current strategic context of Security and Defence in Europe:

- ***What are the assumptions regarding the foreseeable threats that Europe has to cope with today and will have to face in the future?***
- ***What are the major foreseeable challenges with respect to the reinvigoration of the defence of Europe and what does this mean for an operational military commander?***
- ***What could be done using EUROCORPS in the framework of a renovated EU Security & Defence Policy?***
- ***What has to be done from EUROCORPS itself to better fit for purpose in the above mentioned framework?***

1- Evaluating the strategic context of Security and Defence in Europe in 2018 at the operational level

- a. **A 360° threat** (notion currently developed by NATO): a lot stays about strength ratio (tactical) and thus triggers always more military requirements.
 - i. **Fundamental terrorism** (mostly originated from the Middle East but now spreading in Africa): **enduring threat to be countered inside and outside the European soil**. The key problem is that the local security forces are neither sufficiently trained nor efficiently equipped / organized to fight against armed terrorist groups. Therefore, there is a necessity to think about forward defensive operations meaning deployment of forces at strategic distance. This can be translated in twofold missions: disruption of terrorist networks and operational military assistance to local security forces.
 - ii. **Migration: containment is at stake**. Africa will augment its population by 30% within the next 15 years. The low level of development will hamper this young population to have acceptable conditions of life as far as most of the African countries are not able to support it from an economic point of view. Therefore, it is nowadays assessed that more than 10 million Africans could be appealed for seeking "opportunities" for more wealth in Europe. Demographic imbalance then becomes a high risk with all its consequences on the cohesion of our societies.
 - iii. **Back to high intensity symmetric warfare: re-emergence of the Russian bear**. In a quite offensive manner, Russia is struggling to preserve and even extend its area of influence. It is currently based on robust STRATCOM campaigns as well as on diplomatic singularity. Large scale military operations on the Eastern part of the European soil are not foreseeable in a close future. However, a preventive approach is now adopted, mainly under the initiative of NATO which aims at establishing the military conditions for credible deterrence. This is concretized throughout the NCS adaptation requiring further

contribution from the Nations in order to reinforce the C2 construct in case of a major high intensity conflict in Europe.

- b. **No revolution in military affairs but long lasting deployments:** support of political consolidation, buildup of local security forces as a main effort.
 - i. **New technologies will surely help enhancing military capacities but not in the same proportions than in the past twenty five years.** However, one should consider that technology is likely to be more and more widespread, thus questioning the concept of asymmetric warfare. As an example, modern technology is supporting terrorists' operations today.
 - ii. **Although it is not questionable that we, Western military powers, are still able to win battles, the problem is now how to win a war.** Lessons learned from recent campaigns show that we are able to dominate the enemy at least in the first phase of the campaign but then several questions deserve thorough thinking. Do we have a clear, common and thus appropriate long term strategy? Can we translate applicable strategic objectives into operational and tactical ones, requiring the use of military forces and resources? Do we have the right understanding? Do we have the right approach? The consequence is that we are stuck in long lasting and costly campaigns triggering effects that stay below the expressed levels of ambition.
 - iii. **In this framework, the course of action consisting in supporting the buildup of security forces could be made more efficient provided we truly implement a comprehensive approach to solve crises.** Implementing a comprehensive approach does not mean multiplying the stakeholders in a given theater, all acting in a stove-piped manner. It means that we must concentrate on synchronizing effects aiming at reaching a common strategic end state.

2- Identified challenges for the development of a consolidated European defence: scarce resources, capability gaps calling for a strengthened cooperation

- c. **Necessity of wide and costly procurement plans: 10 years to renovate military tools in Europe.** One common feature amongst the Western armed forces but the US is that there is a fundamental need to regenerate the military assets. Considering the costs of the necessary procurement operations, it is likely that the budgetary efforts which are now envisaged by the Europeans will be mostly dedicated to this capability renewal. This means that no significant augmentation of the strength / manpower can be expected. Setting the conditions to obtain favorable strengths ratios on a battlefield will thus stay at stake.
- d. **Partial abandonment of key capabilities hampering European operational autonomy: a result of the 90s "peace dividend".** The recent campaigns (Balkans, Afghanistan, Africa) have not necessitated the full spectrum of capabilities because:
 - i. Air superiority was established without the need to gain it prior to commit land forces. It was even a pre-condition for deployment.
 - ii. Large and complex combat manoeuvres in theater were not required to gain contact with the enemy and then to defeat it.
 - iii. Strategic deployment and in-theatre movements were not hampered by adversaries' operations.
 - iv. Threats against the C2 structures stayed sufficiently low not to envisage CPs relocation in theatre during the campaign.

As a consequence operational land capabilities such as air defense or bridging have been nearly left aside. Sustainment has been largely outsourced thus challenging military autonomy in this basic function.

- e. **Absence of fully autonomous military power in Europe: dependence upon the US.** Besides the partial or even complete abandonment of some capabilities, the Western Countries have dramatically reduced their military manpower. This has led to a paradoxical situation as far as

fewer soldiers are available at a moment when the amount and the intensity of threats are growing. A realistic assessment allows concluding that no European country is able to deploy more than two fully capable brigades (troops + enablers) on short notice at strategic distance (up to 5000 km). Therefore, when we talk about multi-corps operations we should keep in mind that the complete force generation will take months whereas a strong and durable US involvement will be unavoidable.

- f. **Readiness and flexibility are at stake: mitigating the demanding aspects of contemporary operations.** As mentioned before, it will hardly be affordable for the Nations to create additional structures / organizations to cope with operational challenges in the future. Even though NATO is calling for enhanced contributions, the key for success will be to have multi-role C2 structures, capable of being committed on short notice. This means that the effort must be put in training core capabilities on a permanent basis in order to be able to fulfill different roles without any complex and long lasting preparation processes, this thanks to pre-determined augmentation mechanisms.
- g. **Common efforts and commitments of dual capabilities are crucial for an efficient burden sharing between NATO and the EU.** Competition with EU dedicated C2 structures ought to be avoided. Therefore, the EU/NATO duality in terms of employment of existing military capacities will need to be eased and reinforced. This should generate more flexibility and permeability between both organizations as well as an extensive simplification of all the NATO processes (evaluation, certification for example). The absence of deep discussion regarding the operational burden-sharing between the EU and NATO could result in NATO swallowing up all the available C2 structures for an exclusive assignment in a renovated and more demanding LTRP (necessary to credibly cope with the 360° threat-driven challenges including at least a credible deterrence against a near to peer enemy (Russia)). The Nations have a key role to play to promote the idea that EU-led operations could cover the whole spectrum with the exception of ART-5 like operations.
- h. **EU's main weakness today: a lack of robustness and of comprehensiveness in the chain of command.** Schematically visualizing what a C2 structure could be today for a EU-led operation leads to several conclusions:
 - i. **There is a gap between the POL/MIL – strategic level and the tactical level.** If we take the example of EUTM Central Africa Republic, the Mission Force Commander (MFCdr) has to deal with strategic issues for which the decisions are to be taken in Brussels. Moreover, the MFCdr is not enabled with the fitting assets to solve higher levels' or peripheral operational matters.
 - ii. **There is a loss or even a complete absence of lessons learned at the intermediate military levels.** As a consequence, key operational aspects such as force generation processes, collective training, and comprehensive C2 efficiency are not really improved from one operation to another. This is also a hampering factor for capability enhancement.
 - iii. **There is no structure permanently standing at a determined readiness status** enabling it to be autonomously deployed to take the lead of a theater on short notice (FHQ-like permanent structure).

3- EUROCORPS in the framework of a reinvigorated European defence: a window of opportunity offering reciprocal interests:

- a. **EUROCORPS retains several trumps that could become true catalysts for becoming a pivotal actor in the European defence** (PESCO and PESCO-related initiatives such as the European Initiative for Intervention (EII):
 - i. **Being part of the NATO Force Structure, EUROCORPS retains all the standards related to training and certification which could be transposed to and eventually become common ones with the EU.** This is a first example among others of what could be shared between NATO and the EU. The NATO certification processes are time

consuming and should thus be taken as fully workable for a commitment in an EU framework.

- ii. **EUROCORPS already responds to operational criteria which are currently lacking in the EU**, mainly permanent readiness and deployability.
 - iii. **EUROCORPS is certified and trained as a multi-role HQ**. It can be employed as an Army Corps or as a LCC CP in a NATO framework and as a JHQ (OHQ-like) or as a FHQ in an EU framework. Hence, EUROCORPS can fill the above mentioned gap in terms of C2 capability to plainly take the lead of a theater at the operational level on short notice. As a profitable effect, standing as a permanent FHQ for the EU could ease the force generation process as far as EUROCORPS Nations would very likely commit subordinate units to the HQ in case of a commonly agreed commitment.
 - iv. **EUROCORPS is well experienced in EU-led missions**. Therefore, it is acquainted with the EUMC - EUMS - MPCC - MFC chain of command. This is another reason why it could easily be integrated in a permanent comprehensive C2 construct, being the deployable part of it at the operational and/or the tactical level (main focus: deployable FHQ). This makes EUROCORPS' uniqueness amongst the NATO GRF(L) community. Moreover, EUROCORPS experience in EU-led missions enables it to respond to the foreseeable following needs triggered by the reinforcement of a European defence:
 - (a) Doctrine & TTPs development;
 - (b) Lessons learned collection and analysis;
 - (c) Centre of Excellence for training and education.
 - v. **EUROCORPS has the highest degree of multinational integration among all the similar standing C2 structures in Europe**. This is also a facilitating factor with regards to force generation. Moreover, once acknowledged that the Nations are reluctant to create additional C2 structures even though supplementary operational requirements are recognized, this degree of integration is an example of a win-win burden sharing in terms of resources and manpower.
 - vi. **EUROCORPS has established privileged relationship with the EUMS**. This is ruled by the Letter of Intent signed by both the Head of the EUMS and COMEC in 2016. This prolongs EUROCORPS' experience in terms of EU-led missions and consolidates the HQ's legitimacy to be a key stakeholder in a renovated European defence.
- b. **Moreover, promoting and offering EUROCORPS as a key operational role player in the PESCO will obviously make the HQ more attractive**. It is assessed that if the raison d'être of EUROCORPS is to be used as a whole and not as a provider of individual skills or specific C2 capabilities, this is likely to trigger more eagerness from the Nations to be involved. This means that this perspective could bring rationale to:
- i. Deter some Nations to further downsize their contribution to EUROCORPS;
 - ii. Call for the augmentation of the contingents already engaged in EUROCORPS (Italy, Greece and Romania);
 - iii. Propose to some new Nations to join EUROCORPS.

All in all, this could contribute to reinforce permanent cooperation, commencing with training and education, continuing with force generation and ending with deployments. As a second step, using EUROCORPS as a preferred tool to C2 EU operations in theatre could enhance the Union's legitimacy to autonomously conduct larger scale operations

4- COMEC's preoccupations: keeping EUROCORPS at the highest standards to make it usable at any time and in any context of commitment:

- a. **To guarantee the permanent availability of operational capabilities based upon 6 basic functions:** command & control, intelligence, movement and manoeuvre, joint fires, sustainment and force protection. These functions have to be envisaged in a generic manner so that we avoid

artificial specialization necessitating to re-train the HQ from scratch every time it has another role to fulfil (NRF LCC, FHQ for EUBG as examples). This is achieved thanks to a consolidated training and education plan permitting to continuously retain appropriate knowledge and skills. Moreover, the training and education plan focuses on the most demanding “scenario” which is high intensity symmetric warfare.

- b. **To establish a C2 system, enabled by a reasonable PE (affordability) and a resourceful CE (operational effectiveness, full operational capability).** This means that the peace time construct should allow reaching FOC on short notice for any kind of commitment in four different roles: Corps HQ, LCC, FHQ and JHQ (ref EC Concept of Employment). To this aim:
 - i. **EUROCORPS ought to stay properly manned and resourced in peace time** in order to conduct efficient training.
 - ii. **A plug and play process should be pre-arranged in order to ease and speed up the aggregation of additional operational capabilities upon requirement.** This means that considering the six basic functions as a nucleus of essential operational capabilities that need to be operated in any case (planning, synchronization, execution, assessment and refinement), the HQ must be designed to quickly integrate complementary capabilities and resources to:
 - 1. Enhance its level of command where jointness is key;
 - 2. Be able to synchronize military effects with non-military ones while taking the lead of a theatre as a first entry C2 entity (familiarization with and operationalization of comprehensive approach);
 - 3. Manage large scale battle spaces requiring deployment, movement and synchronized manoeuvre of large main subordinated units (up to divisions) and theatre enablers;
 - 4. Command and control brigades without any intermediate level thus being responsible of the full spectrum of the logistic support of the force.
- c. **To develop a permanent structure as well as standards and procedures completely mirroring those expected for an operation.** This starts with a “train as you fight” logic. It is envisaged as an additional guarantee that readiness and short notice employability are both permanently safeguarded.
- d. **To enshrine EUROCORPS in an operational framework that could allow a global commitment of the HQ.** Being used as a pool of capabilities can quickly become counterproductive as far as this only addresses individuals, thus disrupting the coherence of a consolidated collective training.