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## ESDP OPERATIONS AND THE CHALLENGES OF EVOLVING MULTILATERAL SECURITY

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### *Introduction: The Transformation of Peacekeeping*

Since the 1980s the number of the peace operations organized by the United Nations and other international organizations has steadily increased. In 2003 the European Union Police Mission EUPM was dispatched to Bosnia as the first operation of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). The European Union and the member governments have chosen multilateralism as the cornerstone of all the EU's international action. Accordingly, in security affairs they have implemented this choice by building the European military and civilian capabilities of crisis management and conflict resolution. When these capabilities became operational and ESDP forces were deployed on the ground, the EU's peace operation organizers and commanders as well as the EU's foreign and defence policy-makers engaged themselves in the complex, fluid, and tremendously important process of the transformation of peacekeeping that has been unfolding in the last 30 years. In reality, the UN-organized intervention practice, which was initially created for the sake of controlling truces and interrupting violence, has been changed by the UN and

state policy-makers. By adopting new forms of intervention they have given an unpredicted turn to the existing practice. Consequently, any assessment of the ESDP operations must be made by taking into due consideration this evolving context. Attention must be drawn to the experience of changes like the mounting number of Non-UN-led operations, the emergence of new peacekeeping and peace building actors, and the extension of the tasks of the peace missions<sup>1</sup>.

### *The ESDP as a Building Block of the EU Defence Policy*

The literature dealing with the many aspects that concern the organisation of ESDP operations is rich and growing. The 1999 European Council's Headline Goals for building the European military capability of crisis management and the subsequent introduction of ESDP operations have stimulated the interest and research of many EU analysts. However, interaction between these analysts and the wider research community of peace operation specialists is meagre and insufficient<sup>2</sup>. Possibly, ESDP operations analysts have concentrated too much of their research effort on investigating the 'building' of this important instrument of the EU foreign policy, and paid scant attention to the large body of knowledge dealing with the different aspects of the multilateral operation practice, including the comprehensive analysis

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<sup>1</sup> To this objective the ADISM dataset has been created at the University of Catania. See <http://www.fscpo.unict.it/adism/adism.htm>. ADISM is the Italian acronym for Data Archive on Italy and Multilateral Security. The archive, Codebook version 2.2008, contains the data of 205 multilateral peace operations organized by the European Union, the United Nations, NATO, OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), OAU (Organization of African Unity), AU (African Union), ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), CEMAC (Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa), CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), OAS (Organization of American States), the Commonwealth of Nations, the Arab League, and ad-hoc coalitions. The dataset covers the time period 1 October 1947 – 1 September 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Narrowing the distance, and promoting the dialogue, between the scientists and experts of ESDP operations and those working on different topics and issues of peace operations and multilateral security is the aim of the book Attinà Fulvio and Daniela Irrera, (eds.), *Multilateral security and ESDP operations*, Farnham, (Ashgate), 2010. <http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781409407072>

of the phenomenon in contemporary world politics and the detailed analysis of single cases and issues. However, the inclination of ESDP specialists to concentrate on the building and early experience of the ESDP operations as a *sui generis* phenomenon that develops alongside the worldwide phenomenon of multilateral operations is, let's say, tolerable because the European Union is not an international organization like the others, and the ESDP military and civilian capabilities are more than just the collective instrument of a group of countries. Suffice to say that ESDP is not just the temporary instrument of willing countries to solve distinct conflict cases but the first building block of the EU defence policy. Privileging the study of the 'Union' aspects of the European peace missions, then, is important both scientifically and practically. No one will deny the importance of having good knowledge of all the aspects and phases of the Union's negotiation and decision-making process for the sake, first, of facilitating the making of unanimous decisions to intervene in distinct crises, and, second, organising the EU multinational intervention forces, which normally means assembling a delicate blend of national military and civilian resources as well as balancing different national practices, cultures, interests, and aspirations.

#### *Multi-Task Missions as a Tool for Transmitting Norms*

Today, multilateral missions have mandates not present at the time the United Nations brought this type of intervention in the practice of conflict management. Nowadays, *peacekeeping missions*, mandated to watch over truces and cease-fires, are distinguished from *peace building missions*, mandated to stop international and domestic violence and accomplish assignments like protecting minorities, transferring refugees, and reconstructing the political, civil and administrative structures of the target state, and *peace enforcement missions*, mandated to arrest violence, disband irregular military forces, and reconstruct the conditions of normal civilian life. However, the today most common case is the deployment of multi-task missions. The military and civilian personnel of almost all the operations of the current years use to carry out simultaneously military, political, civil, administrative, and police tasks. Consequently, scientists and professionals prefer to make use of

the terms '*peace support operation*' and '*integrated peace mission*' because these terms encompass all the important forms of multilateral intervention for peace, security, and stability.

Along with the multiplication of the tasks, the demand and supply factors of peace operations have stimulated the growth in number of multilateral missions. Briefly, they are (1) the increased number of violent conflicts since the 1970s when destabilization hurt the structure of government of the world system; (2) the worsening of social conflict in countries anguished by economic backwardness, political repression, and social quarrel, which occurred in the 1980s and the following years because the world economic institutions imposed structural economic adjustment policies and the clause of human rights and democracy reform on the receiving countries; (3) the devolution of violence control to the United Nations and regional security organizations after the Soviet–American rivalry came to an end, and the two principal countries of the global power competition changed their aid policy towards governments and groups in armed conflict; and last but not least (4) the inclination of the political classes and the publics of the states of the Western coalition to uphold the principle of humanitarian protection – also in order to promote the stabilization of the world economy – by taking on themselves both the responsibility to protect and the largest portion of the costs of multilateral operations. Due to this last factor, however, peace missions are considered also as a tool for transmitting norms from the centre to the peripheries of the world system. A number of analysts point to the connection that exists between multilateral intervention and the political and economic programmes of international organizations like the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund. Consequently, they believe that multilateral security missions are both the tool of the world institutions for managing conflicts and reducing violence, and the instrument of the dominant coalition of the world system for diffusing the 'Western model' to the rest of the world. By defending peace and security through armed force intervention, and diffusing the norms and standards of the political and economic institutions of the liberal market democracy, these missions have the unspoken goal of organizational and cultural homogenization of all the troubled areas of the world.

### *Evaluating the Results*

Explaining the growth and functions of multilateral security, however, does not say enough about the controversial issue of the expected results of intervention, namely the interruption of violence and the stabilization of the target states after violence is interrupted. Evaluating the results of intervention implies taking into account the difficult conditions in which any mission takes place. In the receiving states, governments are unable to exercise authority and rule society. They use power to repress opposition. Minimal security conditions are lacking. Mutual trust among social groups is missing. All these conditions feed further social contention. Consequently, it is better to keep expectations low. Peace missions normally affect the symptoms, not the causes of the conflict that multilateral intervention aims to solve. In addition, actions on symptoms such as violence and humanitarian violation frequently bring in unwanted negative effects like the breakdown of the social structure of the target state, and the introduction of new forms of crime. Lastly, it is not easy to start the process of change wished for by the actors of multilateral intervention because missions are usually under-resourced and too short in duration to provide and sustain the conditions that can bring order and stability to the receiving states. Briefly, multilateral intervention usually achieves the immediate interruption of violence but analysts invite caution in respect to the long-term goal of the democratic stabilization of the target countries because a very long time is needed to produce democratization. In fact, such a condition is met only in a very small number of cases.

The European Union's resolve to put in place military and civilian capabilities for crisis and conflict management, then, is to assess in the framework of all these problems and changes. Since 2003, the number of EU active operations has been growing fast, equally in and out of Europe. This process signals the increasing will and capability of the European Union to act as both a regional (European) security organizer and a global security player. But, is Europe in tune with the current change in the peace operation practice? Possibly, the most debated issue in relation to the change concerns the agency of the peace operations. Are regional organisation-led

missions better suited than UN-led ones to accomplish the tasks of peace building? Although non-UN-led operations have been always organised in the international system, in the past three decades the change from the incidence of single-agency – that is, United Nations agency – to multiple agency – that is, international organization and state coalition agency – has been considerably high. But the change has been far from neat. UN-led operations coexist with both UN-delegated (authorized/endorsed) regional operations – that is, regionalized UN operations – and minilateral operations – that is, operations led by international organizations and coalitions of states with no UN authorization and endorsement. This change is explained by analysts as the inevitable consequence of the erosion of the global leadership of the United States and the Western countries coalition. In this perspective, the organization of ESDP operations is understood as the hard political choice of the EU's policymakers to give to the European Union the chance of playing an autonomous and specific role in multilateral security. Success may depend on the appropriate decisions to make to face the problems of the changing practice of intervention.

### *Is Peace Building too Intrusive?*

Peace building is controversial matter. Re-building autonomous states implies sovereignty restrictions. As mentioned earlier, peace operations are a tool for expanding the political and economic projects of the mission organizers. The UN authorization notwithstanding, this may be the case of the Western-organized and ESDP operations. The European Union participation in the post-conflict reconstruction of the Balkan states is an example of liberal state reconstruction fully legitimated by the United Nations. However, the European policy-makers have to take into serious consideration existing discontent toward the implication of this condition. Less intrusive ways of supporting peace and re-building stability in the countries of ESDP operations must be accurately prepared in order to enhance the future development of the EU's capabilities for crisis and conflict management.

To create better conditions for improving the legitimacy and efficiency of the missions, analysts point to the important role of nongovernmental organizations. The priority of NGOs action is, indeed, on human and civil rights as well as environment and social issues. NGOs are seriously committed to amplifying the local actors' expectations on social, political, and practical needs. Regarding the European Union, analysts emphasize the importance of moving towards adopting less intrusive methods of crisis management as well as promoting the participation of nongovernmental groups in ESDP missions.

### *Security Sector Reform (SSR) in the Mission-Receiving Countries*

Peace building and reconstruction cannot avoid fulfilling tasks like police reform, judicial backing, and border training in the countries of intervention. Therefore, the Security Sector Reform (SSR) of the mission-receiving countries has become one of the most important tasks of current peace missions. The EU has made SSR a key aspect of its performance abroad, and is one of the most proactive actors in the SSR area. However, analysts contend that security sector reforms have been made always in the appropriate way. They remark, for example, that the reform of the defence sector and the transformation of police and the judiciary of the receiving states which have been made by the missions organized by the UN, NATO, and the EU have taken due consideration of the need for the democratic control of those areas.

Lastly, experts underline the need for mission actors to have a clear agenda and adamantly uphold the commitment to go through with the whole operation. They have to overcome obstacles and set-backs like an unexpectedly high number of casualties and rising financial costs, something that has been hardly achieved by the European and many other countries of the world. The influence of domestic political competition may hamper European states' resolve to complete an operation. The case of the EUFOR operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo is cited frequently as a case in point. Germany, which was in charge of the operation command, refused to undertake an extended mandate once the tasks stipulated in the UN Security

Council Resolution had been fulfilled because the government did not want to go through another vote in the Bundestag. However, in the operations conducted by the European Union as the partner of the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (the Artemis and EUFOR military missions, and the EUPOL and EUSEC civilian missions), the EU acted as a reliable partner of the UN in guaranteeing peace and security. On the whole, the Congo operations demonstrate that in an EU–UN partnership, the two organizations can profit from their collaboration. Such a partnership gives the European Union the chance to gain respect and power in the international system, and the United Nations the opportunity to rely on a peace operation actor strongly inclined to bear the costs of multilateral security.

The preliminary condition for putting peace operations in place is the propensity of states to take on themselves the costs of intervention in violent conflicts. The empirical analysis of the engagement of countries like France, Italy, Spain, and Sweden (see, Attinà and Irrera, *Multilateral security and ESDP operations*) demonstrates that the recognized propensity-relevant factors – i.e. the democratic status and culture of the country as well as economic wealth, population and army size, and international position – belong to the European countries, and confirm the favourable inclination of the EU states to bear the costs of peace operations. The complexity of the task notwithstanding, we can conclude that this condition hints at the continuation of the EU’s proactive role in multilateral security.

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