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European Security Defense Force: Asset or a Liability
Real Possibility or Smoke and Mirrors

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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16 May 2003

European Security Defense Force: Asset or a Liability – Real Possibility or Smoke and Mirrors

Introduction

The European Union (EU) has replaced NATO's Operation Allied Harmony mission in Macedonia. Javier Solano, EU foreign policy chief, indicated "this first military deployment of the EU Rapid Reaction Force (EURRF) will put EU-NATO relations on a different footing."¹ As his remarks suggest, EU officials aim to use the mission in Macedonia to prove that Europe can and must develop a military capability independent of United States influence or interference. The European Union's expectation is to conduct military missions throughout Europe, Africa and internationally, capable of sustainment [field operations] for at least a year. At first glance, this appears to be just what the United States would prefer -- Europe taking control of security situations in their own 'backyard' and balancing burden-sharing among the NATO partners. However, if the EURRF initiative goes poorly, then it would be up to NATO to clean up the mess -- which may be more costly in the long run in political capital, operational cooperation, and lives on the battlefield.

The EURRF is still very much in its infancy. As will be detailed later, the Macedonia operation handover from NATO to the EU effectively only caused a change in uniform insignia and head cover.

This paper will attempt to show the operational command relationships and challenges as a subset of politics and localized agenda. It will also attempt to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the command alignment, military operations, as well as operational planning that may lead to more problems than solutions for NATO and the

U.S. interests in the long run. The advent of the EURRF is for the sake of bolstering internal EU political power and not directly or necessarily to improve security management and effectiveness. This initiative will influence the plans of NATO and the Commander, U.S. European Command (EUCOM) in unintended ways.

Background – The Advent of the EURRF.

The conception of a European Military began after World War II in an attempt to reduce the potential for future internal conflict on the European continent. The Europeans needed time to stabilize their countries, rebuild industries, cities, and infrastructure and restore their economies. The EU is the result of the European countries coming together to form organizations such as the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), the European Economic Community (EEC), Western European Union (WEU), etc, and finally in 1992 the EU. Some believed NATO, which emerged after World War II as an organization for the European continent's collective defense, had passed its usefulness after the end of the cold war. After the 1991 Gulf War and the events in the Bosnia, Kosovo and Serbia, it was evident that the European Union's soft security, although it did have a credible role in the Balkans, was not sufficient to "combine push with shove"² when soft security failed, and thus NATO would continue to provide European collective defense and collective security.

In 1993, the EU ratified the 1991 Maastricht Treaty to establish the Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP) as the second pillar of the EU. The Treaty spells out fundamental objectives and how member states of the EU should maintain their *Common*

¹ "European Rapid Reaction Force to deploy in Macedonia," World Socialist Web Site, 01 Feb 2003, <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/feb2003/mace-f01_prn.shtml> [14 May 2003]

² Simon Duke, The EU and Crisis Management: Development and Prospects (Maastricht, Netherlands: European Institute of Public Administration 2002), 33

Foreign Security Policy. A statement from the Treaty on the European Union Title V states: “The Member States shall support the Union's external and security policy actively and unreservedly in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity. The Member States shall work together to enhance and develop their mutual political solidarity. They shall refrain from any action which is contrary to the interests of the Union or likely to impair its effectiveness as a cohesive force in international relations.”³

In 1989 it became evident that there was no threat of the Soviets crossing into Western Europe and many Americans and Europeans felt that the Europeans should develop a European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI). The U.S. and NATO proposed the concept of an ESDI but there was no framework for implementation. The overarching idea was to increase burden-sharing so that the Europeans would play a larger role in the defense of Europe, not depend so heavily on the Americans and not create too much duplication of existing capabilities in NATO. The British and a few other European States felt that such an identity was necessary but resisted, because if Europe was to build a capable military, the U.S might feel free to remove its forces from Europe and adopt an isolationist posture, thus increasing the possibility that NATO would collapse. The French continually tried to pursue the development of the ESDI in the form of a Euro-Force so that Europeans would not have to rely on the U.S. led NATO. The EU did not possess any military assets to respond to crisis management or other military tasks so once the British and NATO were convinced that the Euro-Force was intended to complement NATO, the EU adopted Western European Union's (WEU)

³ Treaty on the European Union, Provisions on a Common Foreign and Security Policy [Maastricht Treaty], (Maastricht, Netherlands: 1992), Title V, art 11.

limited military forces and missions of crisis prevention/management as set out in the Petersburg Declaration.⁴ It is important to note that the limited WEU forces were the same forces that were apportioned to NATO should a need arise. With agreement of NATO, these forces utilized NATO equipment, but not without some opposition from non-WEU NATO members, with Turkey as the lead opponent.

The European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) which is sometimes referred to as the Common European Security Defense Policy (CESDP) came about because a few European countries, with France as the forerunner, resenting that there was still too much dependence on the U. S. for the security of Europe. France and Great Britain disagreed for years about creating a defense force to rival NATO. Despite the resentment and the lack of a Soviet threat, NATO was still the only force in Europe capable of handling the continent's complex crisis management. Events in the Balkans show that there would be continued reliance on the U.S.-led NATO for any major security issues and because of heavy reliance on exclusive U.S.-held assets, few European countries would be able to prohibit or veto actions to be taken by NATO.

The U.S. Military still maintains a substantial presence in Europe, and President George H. Bush and later President William Clinton's attention was focused more on domestic and economic issues. The British witnessed trends in a steady reduction of U.S. military forces in Europe and the U.S. conviction to cease underwriting European Security in the same ways as during the Cold War, and began to work with France and other Europeans to help build the ESDP. The EU launched the CESDP at the Cologne Summit in June 1999. At the Helsinki summit which built on the Cologne summit, the

⁴ Western European Union Council of Ministers, June 19, 1992, Petersburg Declaration, sec. II.5, Bonn, Germany, 6

EU defined its crisis-management role and proposed the creation of the EU Rapid Reaction Force (EURRF). The Nice summit established military and political structure of the EURRF in December 2000 (see fig 1).

The U.S. response to ESDP is one that many Europeans consider being the U.S. speaking with a forked tongue. On one hand, the U.S. wants the burden and responsibility sharing with the Europeans, but at the same time wants to maintain the U.S. leadership role through NATO for the good of the region. The U.S. has been supportive of the ESDP but some say that is because U.S. politicians did not see the obvious difference between the NATO induced ESDI and the European push for an ESDP capable of rivaling NATO.

EU Force Structure: Smoke and Mirrors

Initially, EU members declared “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 [an] international crisis”⁵. They would also try to avoid duplication of NATO structure and did imply the creation of a Euro-Army. The Helsinki Headline Goal set by the Helsinki Council proposed:

- *“by the year 2003, cooperating together voluntarily, they [EURRF] will be able to deploy rapidly and then sustain forces capable of the full range of Petersburg tasks as set out in the Amsterdam Treaty, including the most demanding, in operations up to corps level with up to 15 brigades or 50,000-60,000 persons.*

⁵ Stanley R. Sloan, NATO, the European Union and the Atlantic Community (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield 2003), 175.

- *These forces should be militarily self-sustaining with the necessary command, control and intelligence capabilities, logistics, other combat support services and as appropriate, air and naval elements.*
- *Member States should be able to deploy in full at this level within 60 days, and provide smaller rapid response elements available and deployable at very high readiness.*
- *They must be able to sustain such a deployment for at least one year. This will require an additional pool of deployable units and supporting elements at lower readiness to provide replacements for the initial forces.”⁶*

In addition to the troop strength, the eventual goal is to put in place “100 ships and 400 aircraft”⁷ for a credible maritime and air force.

It is important to note that the forces provided to the EURRF by membership countries are the same forces which would be provided should a NATO crisis arise. The EU has no policies or law that ensures commitment of these forces to NATO in the event NATO required them. The U.S. on the other hand does have written policies that cover this situation. The Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP) and the CJCS Command Arrangements for Dual-Based Forces instruction covers both dual apportionment and dual-basing of forces respectively. The dual apportionment forces (which are more related to the EU situation) are forces assigned to more than one plan which can be executed simultaneously. The dual-based forces are those assigned to NATO but are

⁶ “Helsinki Headline Goal,” Council of the European Union, “EU Military Structures,” <<http://ue.eu.int/pesc/military/en/HeadGoal.htm>> [14 May 2003]

⁷ “EU Pledges ‘rapid’ force troops,” CNN.com, 21 Nov 2000, <<http://ue.eu.int/pesc/military/en/HeadGoal.htm>> [14 May 2003]

based in the home country (in the U.S. for our forces) and maintained at a high state of readiness to ensure their rapid deployment to NATO within specified time frames. Just like apportioned forces, no other Combatant Commander is authorized to utilize these forces without the Secretary of Defense's approval. That begs the question: "What would happen if NATO requires EU forces while they are deployed on an EU mission"? Moreover, much of the equipment being utilized by the EURRF is actually equipment owned by NATO.

*"We now share the facilities and capabilities of this headquarters and, as you have seen, the flags of NATO and EU fly side by side above our main entrance. The cooperation and strategic partnership we have established are indeed landmark decisions."*⁸

German Admiral Rainer Feist
Deputy, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR)

In an attempt to meet its 2003 headline goal, the EU replaced NATO for its first mission in Macedonia. On 1 April 2003, NATO turned over its mission, Operation Allied Harmony,⁹ in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) to the EU. Code named by the EU Operation Concordia and dubbed a vital milestone in the history of the NATO-EU strategic partnership, the European Force mission is to maintain continued stability "to achieve a peaceful, democratic and prosperous country where

⁸ "European Union Military visits SHAPE," Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe News, 15 April 2003, <<http://ue.eu.int/arym/index.asp?lang=EN>> [01 May 2003]

⁹ Allied Harmony is the current's mission title. The previous names of the operations were Operation Essential Harvest and Operation Amber Fox.

international security presence is no longer needed.”¹⁰ The force consists of 350 soldiers from 27 European countries.¹¹ The majority of the soldiers are from France. Command and control is led by the most senior military European at NATO, German Admiral Rainer Feist, Deputy, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR). The hand over of Operation Allied Harmony was only in the uniform insignia and head cover and there was little change among personnel and resources from NATO to the EU. What it came down to (and planned for) is, one day the soldiers were patrolling the streets of Macedonia as NATO and the next day they sewed on a badge with the European colors (blue with gold stars) on their right shoulders and mounted their insignia bearing the name “EUfor” (European Force) and went back on patrol. The force make-up, is in fact, French heavy: the Danish soldiers went home, the Polish soldiers stayed (although they are NATO, but not EU), and there are contributions from 12 EU candidate states - Iceland, Switzerland, Norway, Russia and Ukraine. However, they were mostly the same soldiers, with the same equipment, conducting the same mission and headed by the same Command and Control structure as they were the day before, however, they were no longer wearing the NATO badge. The mission is scheduled to last six months before the first group rotates out. This mission is being viewed as the EU ‘getting its feet wet’ and if it is successful, it could lead to the EU taking over in Bosnia and conducting other missions throughout Europe and Africa. There is skepticism from some implied that NATO had already planned to end this mission and “the EU was taking over in a country where it was no longer needed [it was being conducted] for the symbolic value of having

¹⁰ “Operation Concordia,” EU Military Operation in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, <<http://ue.eu.int/arym/index.asp?lang=EN>> [01 May 2003]

a first mission.”¹² However, Admiral Feist stated that “The situation is such that it has improved, but...we continue to need an international military presence in the country.”¹³

A possible drawback from the change in uniform could affect legitimacy and create a critical vulnerability. The people of Macedonia saw what they considered a credible force (NATO) on the streets with a good reputation. The NATO forces are very experienced and have a good record in peace keeping. When the Macedonians, troublemakers or terrorists notice that the patrolling force is no longer NATO, will they maintain the same respect? Can there be problems with the non-NATO soldiers in the area of Rules Of Engagement? What about Command and Control (C²)? There were initial concerns with the C² setup within the EURRF organization. Although the NATO-EU Concordia agreement called for a NATO headquarters and C² arrangement, France preferred a non-NATO C² and headquarters structure and wanted to utilize France’s or another EU member’s national headquarters. That idea did not sit well with NATO military commanders and many of the participating countries in agreement with NATO preferred the NATO options. The solution was to head the operation at what NATO considers the operational level with Admiral Feist, the Chief of Staff for AFSOUTH as the assistant Operational Commander [JTF Commander], and in Macedonia, the senior EU officer is French Major General Maral and the Senior Military Rep (SMR)/ Senior NATO rep is Spanish Major General Del Manzo. At first glance, this appears to be just what the United States preferred -- Europe taking control of security situations in their

¹¹ The force includes the 15 EU nations, EU aspirants and some NATO-non EU counties.

¹² “EU takes over Macedonia,” EUobserver, 31 March 2003,
<<http://www.euobserver.com/index/phtml?print=true&sid=9&aid=10738>> [01 May 2003]

¹³ Ibid

own 'backyard', economy of force and improved burden-sharing among the NATO partners. However, if the EURRF initiative goes poorly, then it would be up to NATO to clean up the mess -- which may be more costly in the long run in political capital, operational cooperation, and lives on the battlefield. Because there are two Major Generals on the ground in Macedonia, one [Major General Maral] commanding the ground troops and the other [Major General Del Manzo] commanding the staff and logistics, such Command and Control structure also cause major problems in unity of command.

Crisis Management and Decision Making

There are some key differences in how crisis management is handled and the EU and NATO perform decision-making. A graphic view of both organizations' main command structures can be found in Figures 1 and 2. The command structures and decision-making process in the two organizations are somewhat similar in that the CFSP, the European Council sets the political guidelines. All subsequent decisions to implement these guidelines are to be adopted by the General Affairs Council, to the Political Security Committee and on down the chain. For NATO, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) is the central body for decision-making and meets as the summit of heads of state, the foreign ministers, or defense ministers. NATO and the EU are both consensus-based decision-making bodies. However, 'consensus-based' does not always equal 'unanimity.' In some cases, consensus means that no participating state can veto a decision. "In NATO, consensus is the basis for all decisions. In the EU, the European Council requires unanimity and the General Affairs Council may adopt decisions on the

basis of qualified majority.”¹⁴ The EU operates on declarations and common positions. “In 1998, the European council adopted more than 160 declarations and only 22 common positions. Declarations dominate because they are non-binding.”¹⁵ With the varied opinions among the European countries and the required unanimity, it is normally difficult to get resolutions passed when there is a split among the member states. For instance, when an issue is brought forward to the European Council, which may involve the EU conducting a mission being pushed by NATO, France, Germany and a couple of small countries can easily veto the mission. The fact that it only takes four countries to bring a veto is because unanimity is not just a function of the physical number of countries involved, but each country has a different weight (number of votes) based on the size of the country and what they bring to the union.

Once accepted, a decision made by the European Council goes through the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and on through to the EU Military Committee (figure 1). In contrast, if France does not agree with a mission being pushed through NATO, France is unable to veto the decision because NATO can work around France (figure 2). NATO can avoid a French led veto by routing the military decision through the Defense Planning Committee (DPC) where France does not have a vote (because they do not provide Military assets to NATO). Because of the construct of the NATO command structure, NATO can then influence member countries who normally side with France, but in a forum which France is not a party. So when there is a crisis-management

¹⁴ Heinz Gartner, Adrian Hyde-Price, and Erich Reiter, Europe’s New Security Challenges, n.p.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. 2001; reprint, http://www.atlanticcommunity.org/Europe’s_Security_Architecture.pdf > [10 April 2003], 10

¹⁵ Ibid, 24

decision to be made, the NATO decision-making body is better structured to be able to make something happen.

The EU recognizes its dependency on NATO and as a part of the 1999 Helsinki Council discussed above the EU planned to put in place by 2003, the appropriate command, control, computer and intelligence, logistics, facilities, full naval and air combat support so that the EURRF would be able to conduct power projection as well as crisis-management tasks. Once the EU goes through the decision-making process and decides to take a mission, the EU would still have to get NATO's acceptance to utilize NATO's assets and would, in turn, have to get the member countries to agree on the EU use of the assets. It is however, in the U.S. and NATO's interest to rely on the EU to provide forces and conduct missions that NATO is not interested in. Nevertheless, the EU is so dependent on NATO assets to conduct such missions that it will be difficult to plan on the EU taking these missions.

EURRF Analysis: Strengths and Weaknesses

To assess the operational capabilities of the EU, let us go back to the U.S.-NATO push for ESDI. After the Gulf War, the U.S. politicians as well as the American public wanted President Clinton to focus more of his attention on domestic issues. As these feelings brewed in the U.S., a U.S.-led NATO proposal was approved in a NATO summit to create a Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) as a part of the NATO's integrated command structure. It was approved at a NATO Foreign Ministers summit in Berlin and authorized some of the NATO responsibilities to be moved to the WEU. The creation of the CJTF was read differently by the involved countries. U.S. European Command was planning for reduced forces or smaller footprint in Europe and France, who wanted to de-

Americanize NATO and create a truly European military, saw this as an opportunity for Europeans to operate under the NATO command structure but it allowed the European members to act autonomously. European-led security is what the U.S. military leaders wanted but after the response from France, the U.S. was afraid that the EU command arrangements might significantly reduce the European commitments to NATO and wanted to ensure that Europeans were not trying to sever the transatlantic link. The real capabilities of the Europeans were often questioned and there were concerns among NATO diplomats and U.S. military leaders, that despite the push from the French, the Europeans were not ready to act autonomously.

The results of the European actions and inactions in the Balkans solidified the U.S. and some Europeans concerns. “The cumulative record of EU failure and NATO’s recovery [in the Balkans] sharpened the issue of whether an EDSI built within NATO on the CJTF principle was satisfactory. For the European allies, the record could be read two ways: as making a compelling case for them to take more drastic measures to augment their military resources and to cement their union, or as providing telling evidence that the quest for an autonomous ESDI was futile. Few drew the first conclusion.”¹⁶ “During the intervening years, it was demonstrated that they [the Europeans] did not have the combination of military resources and political will to take on operations such as the Implementation Force (IFOR) or Stabilization Force (SFOR) in

¹⁶ Michael Brenner, Terms of Engagement: The United States and the European Security Identity The Washington Papers no. 176, Center for Strategic and International Studies (Westport, Conn. Praeger, 1998), 35

Bosnia, and the United States provided most of the key resources for the air war against Serbia over Kosovo.”¹⁷

The issue of sustainability and show of force is an issue that the EU will have to contend with. In order to take on an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission like in Bosnia or Afghanistan, it would require considerable troop strength. The Headline Goals aimed for by the EURRF is 50,000 to 60,000 troops. With this number it may be possible to sustain while conducting peacekeeping and humanitarian tasks as pointed out in the Petersburg task, - “combat forces in crisis-management, peacemaking, humanitarian and rescue, peacekeeping”¹⁸ - but to conduct show of force and to also project power, it will take a considerable amount more.

NATO has the ability to project power and deliver considerable military force in the form of land forces, maritime forces and air power. The task of “combating forces in crisis-management roles, including peacemaking”¹⁹ might be a case of EU power projection. The international interpretation of the term crisis-management which seems to accord with conflict management is considered to be “actions undertaken with the main objective to prevent the vertical escalation (intensification of violence) or horizontal (territorial spread) escalation of existing violent conflicts.”²⁰ The Headline Goals are to be sustainable for a year and the EU plans to conduct missions in areas such as Eastern Europe, Africa and internationally (Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, etc). The actual

¹⁷Sloan, 171.

¹⁸ Western European Union, “Petersburg Declaration,” 19 Jun 1992, Western European Union Council of Ministers, 6

¹⁹ Ibid,

²⁰ Duke, xvi

strength of the force required may have to be three times that listed in the Headline Goals to provide replacements for continuous rotation -- approximately 150,000 to 180,000 troops.

When the topic of NATO's military might is discussed, the assets are in fact under the national command of the individual NATO member countries and many of the critical assets are held exclusively by the U.S. A definite weakness of the EU, they depend heavily on NATO and the U.S. to provided logistical support. There is a need for the EU to improve both in Strategic and in-theater transport capabilities. This is an area where the EU can improve dramatically if they were to pool their resources and develop their own EU assets. The British has the majority of the heavy lift capability in the EU but much of this lift capability is used up providing NATO and conducting bilateral missions with the U.S. The Germans like-wise has considerable mobility in air lift and heavy trucks and Jeeps. There are many things to consider when utilizing these assets. For instance, the Germans provided a number of Jeeps (wolfs) during the Kosovo conflict. What was not considered is that the Germans turned over all of the maintenance responsibility of these vehicles to civilians in country. When the vehicles were sent in, there was no one to conduct maintenance on the vehicles. The Germans made an attempt to hire local Albanian mechanics, but there were significant problems in keeping the vehicles running.

The area of logistics can be a crippling factor once the EU begins to conduct larger-scale missions and as they diverge to areas outside on Europe. To conduct peacekeeping and humanitarian missions in Africa will prove to be a significant logistics challenge.

Recommendations:

NATO and EUCOM should take a serious look at the capabilities of the EURRF. If developed properly, this force can be a significant asset to NATO and compliment the reduction of U.S. forces being considered in Europe. NATO and EUCOM should continue to bolster the EU to increase defense spending so that they can pool their resources to increase their capabilities in reconnaissance and intelligence, strategic and in-theater transport, and also increased capabilities unique to individual countries that when pooled create a credible EU force that does not solely rely on NATO assets. Much of this may sound like it is above the operational commander's level, but he can influence some of these decisions by exercising and operating with the EU forces.

NATO and European Command should conduct meaningful exercises with the EU forces so that their capabilities can be incorporated in the areas of their expertise. If we know that the EU will conduct peace-keeping missions, European command should conduct a peace enforcement exercise and incorporate the hand-off from peace enforcement to peacekeeping to the EU. The exercise should go through the full range of turning over operational command and control, forces and logistics. This would reveal coordination problems to be corrected in the areas of standardization and operability. U.S./NATO should encourage the EU forces to operate with both U.S./NATO assets and their own. When the European participants witness the increased capability possibilities and how it would improve their operations, it might encourage them to go back to the EU and their own country's political decision-makers and convince them to increase their defense spending to acquire these enhanced capabilities thus, interoperability and standardization.

U.S. European Command and NATO should encourage and exercise with the EU and other European countries in their specialties. Incorporating and exercising the Norwegians elite Special Forces, the Czech mobile nuclear, chemical and biological defense units, Spain's air-to-air refueling and the Germans strategic lift (among other specialized capabilities), can improve the EU military capabilities and ultimately improving the ESDI. U.S./NATO should encourage more specialization and with the pooling of the EU assets, the EU can provide a more capable force as a Union.

Conclusion

Although the EU is currently more of a liability than an asset, the U.S. and NATO should continue to improve their relations and increase training and exercise operations to help them develop the force they are trying to achieve. It will not be easy to convince the EU to increase their defense spending or to develop the forces with the capabilities that the U. S. and NATO would like them to create. The recent unpleasanties [between France and U.S. /U.K.] in Brussels have caused the EU future takeover of the Bosnia Herzegovina operations to be shelved. However, NATO should help the EU in improving their CESDP. It will soon be recognized by the EU member states that France is always opposed to keeping the peace in the Union and hopefully, member states will start to override them. The impact of the '*Common*' in CESDP will continue to not only affect the European States relationship (old Europe vs. New Europe), but NATO, U.S. and the U.S. European Commander as well in combined operational planning, combined and joint exercising and security cooperation planning.

Once the EU develops a credible military force, they will be able to relieve some of NATO's current problems of 'donor fatigue', and allow the U.S. to reduce its footprint in Europe.

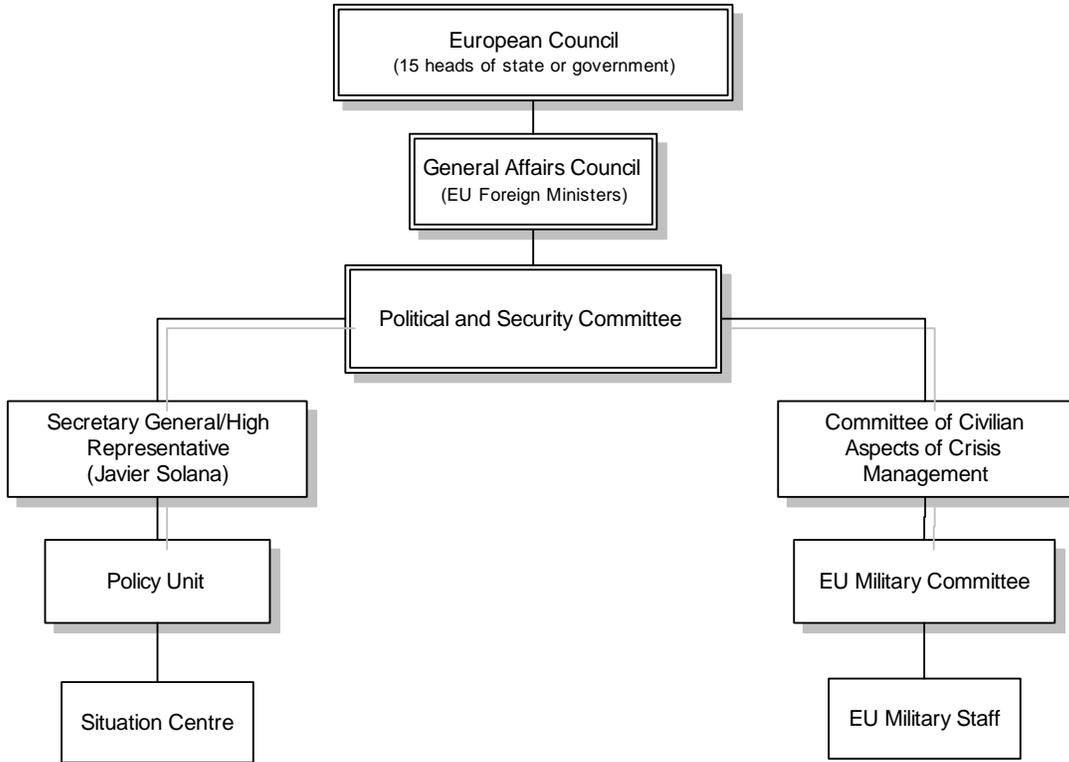


Figure 1: European Union Main Command Structure

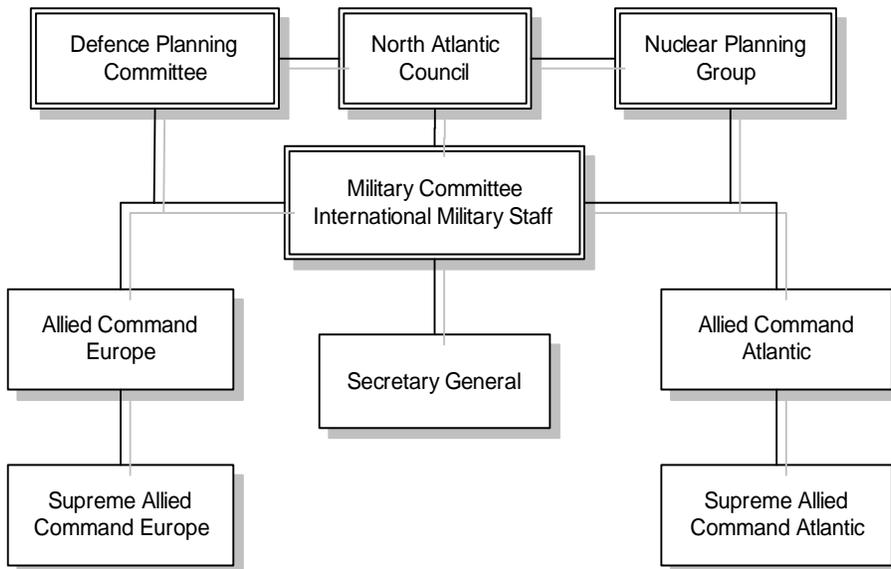


Figure 2: NATO Main Command Structure

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