

**THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE AFRICAN UNION AS
STRATEGIC PARTNERS IN PEACE OPERATIONS:
NOT GRASPING THE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT NETTLE¹**

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INTRODUCTION

Since the mid-90s, there has been a concerted and continuing drive by developed countries to assist Africans with a range of capacity-building programmes aimed at developing continental peace operations capabilities. When evaluating progress with these efforts, it is useful to clarify what exactly these capabilities should be. Are we speaking of military peacekeeping interventions, or of a much broader notion of peace support that is akin to UN multidimensional operations with their strong focus on peacebuilding? There is another fundamental issue to be considered: Are we speaking of enhancing capacity for African participation in and leadership of United Nations operations in Africa? Or is the primary intention to create African capacity to launch, lead and sustain peacekeeping interventions under the auspices of the African Union and/or one or more of the sub-regional organizations?

Increasing attention is being paid to the latter, to the exclusion of supporting the African contribution to the UN's missions in Africa which, though not without serious blemishes, have been far more impressive than that of the African Union or the 'subordinate' sub-regional organizations. Moreover, after a five-year post-Somalia withdrawal from the continent, United Nations peacekeeping has re-engaged with Africa on a larger scale than ever before. Since 1999, the UN has launched and sustained significant and substantial operations in Sierra Leone, DR Congo, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi and Sudan. It is clear that there has not been a retrenchment in UN operations in Africa, as was predicted a decade ago. It is also worth recalling that it was the perceived withdrawal of international support for UN peacekeeping in Africa that led to the current drive to create an independent African peace operations capability in the first place.

While there may be strong arguments in favour of a more modest approach to African peace operations capacity-building – one that focuses on enhancing the quality and quantity of African contributions to UN operations – these are beyond the scope of this paper. Rather, this paper recognizes that plans for the establishment of an African Standby Force are well underway, and seeks to identify the principle impediments to the realization of these plans. The objective is to suggest ways in which the emergent partnership between the AU and the EU (and other actors) can prove more effective in building actual, rather than virtual, peace operations capabilities at the continental level.

EMERGENCY FORCES OR MULTIDIMENSIONAL MISSION CAPABILITIES?

If we accept that there is a real need for creating an independent African capability for peace operations, then it is clear that there is still a marked lack of clarity and policy direction as to the exact nature and scope of such operations. Is the intention to create regional "fire brigade" forces that can intervene in conflicts as a stop-gap measure, until such time as the UN can launch a full-blown multidimensional mission capable of supporting the full range of peacekeeping and peace-building activities? Or is the intent rather to create African capabilities to independently engage in multidimensional missions on the African continent?

Common wisdom points to the former interpretation, because the AU and the sub-regional organizations clearly cannot mobilize the full range of UN agencies and international partners in the same way as the UN can. Indeed, the trend is increasingly towards integrated missions, which may be defined as "...an instrument with which the UN seeks to help countries in transition from war to lasting peace, or address a similarly complex situation that requires a

system-wide UN response, through subsuming various actors and approaches within an overall political-strategic crisis management framework.”²

The EU’s understanding is perhaps also in line with the concept of a more limited mission capability for Africa, one which could stabilize and temporize a conflict situation until such time as the UN is ready and able to take over the responsibility for peacebuilding. For example, in explaining the rationale behind the EU-funded African Peace Facility, the European Commission states that:

*“Today the UN faces two main challenges in accomplishing its mission. First, the number of peace keeping missions throughout the world continues to grow, risking to overstretch the UN’s ability to intervene quickly: this is particularly true of Africa, at present the theatre of the greatest number of conflicts. Secondly, the UN’s mandate to send peace keeping troops is often dependent on the agreement of all parties to a conflict. The African Peace Facility will support AU initiatives designed to promote and accelerate the establishment of the appropriate conditions for the UN to intervene and fulfill its international responsibilities.”*³

On the other hand, the Africans seem to be aspiring towards the creation of full-range, multidimensional mission capabilities – at least in terms of the AU’s broad legal and policy framework for peace operations. For example, in the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union,⁴ Article 13 (3), the African Standby Force is mandated to conduct the full range of operations and tasks associated with contemporary multidimensional UN operations – including preventive deployment, intervention in a Member State, humanitarian assistance, post-conflict disarmament and demobilization, and peacebuilding.

However, the process of establishing a continental peace operations capability has been driven, since October 1997,⁵ almost exclusively by African defence chiefs, whose political bosses have become only recently (and superficially) involved. And donor support has been directed mainly at building African force capabilities. For example, the French proposed assistance with creating an African Intervention Force at the Biarritz Francophone Summit of 1994. The French initiative included plans for the training of contingents in ‘peace maintenance’, and the training of a high command staff.⁶

Similarly, in October 1996, former US Secretary of State Warren Christopher traveled to Africa to promote a proposal to set up an all-African military force. The African Crisis Response Force (ACRF) was to be used to deal with African crises where insurrections, civil

² N Reindorp and P Wiles, *Humanitarian Coordination: lessons from recent field experience: A study commissioned by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, ODI, London, 2001, p14.

³ European Commission, *Securing Peace and Stability for Africa: The EU-funded African Peace Facility*, 2004.

⁴ African Union, *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union*, Adopted by the 1st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, Durban, 9 July 2002. Hereafter simply referred to as the “PSC Protocol”.

⁵ A group of military experts from 45 African nations met in Harare, from 21-23 October 1997 to draft peacekeeping proposals for consideration by the Second Meeting of the African Chiefs of Defence Staff (ACDS) on 24-25 October 1997. The meetings in Harare produced no fewer than fifty substantive recommendations on establishing an African standby peacekeeping force.

⁶ *Ibid.*

war or genocide threaten mass civilian casualties. It was envisaged that the ACRF would take six months to build, and that it would consist of a headquarters, support elements, and nine or ten African battalions. However, the American ‘quick fix’ proposal was met with widespread scepticism and, in mid-1997, the US transformed the idea of an African intervention force into a longer term “capacity building” initiative (the African Crisis Response Initiative, or ACRI) – a training programme aimed at enhancing African peacekeeping capacities, particularly the capacity to mount an effective, collective response to humanitarian and other crises.⁷

In parallel with the subsequent series of ACRI training sessions conducted on a bilateral basis with recipient nations, a number of high-profile regional military field training exercises were held across the African continent – beginning with Exercise *Blue Hungwe*, a regional battalion-level peacekeeping exercise presented by the Zimbabwe Defence Forces in conjunction with the British Army in April 1997.

OAU officials and member states soon began to express deep concern about the proliferation of external capacity-building initiatives and field exercises, and the apparent lack of co-ordination among donors and recipient countries alike. In the latter part of 1997, France, Britain and the USA reacted by announcing the launching of a ‘P3’ initiative, which would co-ordinate ongoing and future efforts in the realm of peacekeeping training in Africa. P3 representatives also announced plans to create an Africa Peacekeeping Support Group, open to all interested states, which would meet regularly under UN and OAU aegis to facilitate international co-ordination on peacekeeping training activities.

However, a succession of donor co-ordination conferences has not achieved the goal of developing a more coordinated and joined-up approach to African capacity-building. There is still a confusing array of multilateral and bilateral donor initiatives aimed at supporting the building of peacekeeping and peacebuilding capacities in Africa. Military training programmes – such as RECAMP, ACOTA, and GPOI⁸ – have continued, while a few other, lower profile assistance packages have also emerged. These are targeted at multiple levels – from “grassroots” NGOs to national governments and intergovernmental organizations such as the AU, ECOWAS, SADC and IGAD. While with perennial challenges of donor co-ordination thus remain, there is also a problem with establishing a common understanding of what exactly is to be coordinated – and, indeed, what is meant by “capacity-building”

CAPACITY-BUILDING

Since the mid-90s, *capacity-building* has become a buzzword of choice for most development agencies and assistance programmes.⁹ However, there is no universally accepted definition of the concept – capacity-building simply means different things to different organizations. Originally

⁷ Texts of a briefing by Ambassador Marshall McCallie on the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), US Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, Washington, DC, 29 July 1997.

⁸ RECAMP (Reinforcement of African Peacekeeping Capacities) is a French initiative; ACOTA (African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance) and GPOI (Global Peace Operations Initiative) are US initiatives.

⁹ J. Bossuyt, *Capacity Development: How can Donors do it Better?*, Policy Management Brief No. 5, Maastricht: EDCPM, 1994, p. 2.

described as “technical assistance,” capacity building was designed to address a narrow range of organizational activities. There are now numerous definitions and usages of the phrase within the literature. As used in the developmental context, for example, capacity building refers to an on-going process by which individuals, groups, organizations and societies enhance their ability to identify and meet development challenges in a sustainable way. The UN Development Programme defines capacity-building at the national level as follows:

*"Specifically, capacity building encompasses the country's human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional and resource capabilities. A fundamental goal of capacity building is to enhance the ability to evaluate and address the crucial questions related to policy choices and modes of implementation among development options, based on an understanding of environment potentials and limits and of needs perceived by the people of the country concerned".*¹⁰

A number of definitions have also emerged from the private sector, as an outgrowth of organizational development theory and practice. For example, the US-based Growth Design Corporation sees capacity building as *a continuing process that enables the sustainability of a professional, relevant and legitimate organization that works to fulfill its stated mission*. Capacity building is not just training, but rather a combination of factors and activities focused on the improvement of an organization's performance in relation to its mission, working environment and practical resources. The primary goal is to increase an organization's effectiveness.¹¹

Capacity-building thinking and planning typically integrates with strategic planning. The question of capacity enters the picture when various parts of the organization and its operational practices and processes fall short of delivering the required resources (human, financial and applied knowledge) that are required for strategic plan implementation. However, in the African peacekeeping context, the existence of a realistic strategic plan cannot be taken for granted. As the UNDP has noted: *“Project-by-project financing and different approaches to long-term use of experts, national remuneration, contracting and accountability make it difficult for developing countries to formulate and implement comprehensive strategies.”*¹²

In the developmental arena, capacity building therefore came to be associated with challenging the traditional “top-down approach”, and evolving a set of practices that put emphasis on participatory approaches and *partnership*. Notions of partnership were considered necessary in order to overcome the competing priorities of donors; different approaches to development policy, planning and funding; and the arrogance of self-proclaimed experts. Capacity building is supposed to transform the nature of donor involvement; moving it away from previous approaches characterized by prescription and the imposition of donor priorities and solutions in highly dependant countries. Partnership also requires that donor expert-led practices be replaced

¹⁰ Agenda 21 (Chapter 37, UNCED, 1992.) Own emphasis added.

¹¹ Byron L. Tweeten, Capacity Building for Growth, *Growth Design Corporation* http://www.growthdesign.com/insights/art_capacitybuilding.html

¹² United Nations Development Programme, *Capacity Development*, Technical Advisory Paper 2, UNDP Management Development and Governance Division, Bureau for Policy Development, July 1997. <http://magnet.undp.org/cdrb/Techpap2.htm>

by local training and education, and the transfer of technical know-how –because the aim of capacity building is to nurture local *ownership*.¹³

In its support to African peacekeeping, the European Union has subscribed fully to the notions of capacity-building, partnership and ownership. For example, according to the Cotonou agreement of July 2000, “... the [EU-African] partnership will concentrate in particular on regional initiatives and on building local capacities”.¹⁴ In similar vein, the decision to create the EU-African Peace Facility states that: “The Peace Facility is based on the principle of African ownership. It supports African-led peacekeeping operations in Africa as well as capacity building for the emerging security structure of the African Union (AU) ...”.¹⁵

The part of the AU’s security architecture that has been targeted by most donors for concerted peace operations capacity-building assistance is the African Standby Force. Prior to the creation of the Peace Facility, the major multilateral partner in this process was the G8 group of industrialized democracies, which emerged as the principle external “champion” of the ASF.¹⁶

THE AFRICAN STANDBY FORCE¹⁷

Through the Africa Action Plan, agreed at the Kananaskis Summit in 2002, the G8 leaders committed to providing technical and financial assistance so that, by 2010, African countries and regional and sub-regional organizations are able to engage more effectively to prevent and resolve violent conflict on the continent. Specific assistance that was promised included:

- Continuing to work with African partners to deliver a joint plan, by 2003, for the development of African capability to undertake peace support operations, including at the regional level;
- Training African peace support forces including through the development of regional centres of excellence for military and civilian aspects of conflict prevention and peace support; and
- Better coordinating the respective African peacekeeping training initiatives sponsored by G8 countries.

The framework document on the establishment of the African Standby Force (ASF)¹⁸ subsequently served as the common African position during the Africa–G8 meeting in Evian in June 2003, during which the G8 and African partners agreed on the *Joint Plan* to implement

¹³ UNDP, op.cit.

¹⁴ 2000/483/EC, Partnership agreement between the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000.

¹⁵ Decision 3/2003/CE of the ACP-EC Council of Ministers of 11 December 2003 on the use of resources from the long-term development envelope of the ninth EDF for the creation of a Peace Facility for Africa. <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/r12529.htm>

¹⁶ France, the United States, Britain, Germany, Japan, Italy, Canada, and Russia.

¹⁷ For a comprehensive overview of the development of the ASF, see J Cilliers and M Malan, *Progress with the African Standby Force*, ISS Paper no. 107, May 2005.

¹⁸ Policy Framework for the establishment of the ASF, Exp/ASF-MS/2 (1), which was adopted by the Third Session of African Chiefs of Defence Staff on 15-16 May 2003 and *noted* by the Heads of State and Government at the Maputo Summit in July 2003.

commitments made in the Africa Action Plan. The *Joint Plan* is supposed to provide a focus for the cooperative efforts of external partners, and to confirm the G8's formal recognition of the potential advantages of partnership with NEPAD and the AU in developing African peacekeeping capacity. Importantly, the plan identifies an under-developed *strategic management capacity* for multidimensional peace operations within both the AU and regional organisations as a major obstacle to achieving the requisite peace operations capabilities.¹⁹

Although the G-8 recognised the need to enhance coordination among donors and with African partners to avoid duplication of effort and ensure cost-effectiveness, the reality is that African priorities had not been very clearly (or realistically) identified and articulated at the political level.

The first ever meeting of African Ministers of Defence took place in Addis Ababa from 20-21 January 2004. The purpose of the meeting was to examine the recommendations of the preceding 4th Meeting of the African Chiefs of Defence Staff and Experts, relating to the establishment of the African Standby Force and the finalization of the Common African Defence and Security Policy. The Ministers provided little guidance for their defence chiefs, aside from underscoring the point that Africa should not be unduly dependent on external resources, as such dependence could jeopardize ownership of the process and could limit the scope of action of the AU and Member States. However, in their consideration of the recommendations of the ACDS, the Ministers accepted that the AU was to pursue efforts with the European Union on the African Peace Facility, as agreed to during the Maputo Summit in July 2003.²⁰

The results of the First Meeting of the African Ministers of Defence were disappointing in terms of detailed policy guidance, and are indicative of the immense gap that exists between aspiration and implementation. One of the reasons why this gulf has not yet come into sharp focus, is the fact that the AU's capacity to handle conflicts has been severely tested, way ahead of the establishment timelines for the ASF. In addition to the AU mission in Burundi, which was transformed into a UN operation in June 2004, the AU has spearheaded attempts to resolve the complex emergency in the Darfur region of western Sudan.

When fully established, the ASF will consist of standby multidisciplinary contingents, with civilian and military components located in their countries of origin and ready for rapid deployment anywhere in Africa (or beyond) at appropriate notice. Effective command and control of the ASF will therefore require the installation of an appropriate Africa-wide, integrated and interoperable command, control, communication and information system (C 3IS), linking deployed units with mission headquarters, as well as the AU planning elements (PLANELMs) and regions. To elaborate on its strategic and operational requirements, the AU has convened a series of high-level expert workshops during 2005/2006.

¹⁹ Implementation Report by Africa Personal Representatives to Leaders on the G8 Africa Action Plan, Evian, June 1, 2003. For the full report, including the Annex: Joint Africa/G8 Plan to Enhance African Capabilities to Undertake Peace Support Operations, go to: <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2003evian/index.html#chair> (01 July 2003).

²⁰ Report of the First Meeting of the African Ministers of Defence on the African Standby Force and the Common African Defence and Security Policy 20-21 January 2004, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. MIN/Def.&Sec.1(II)Rpt.

The series of workshops convened at experts' level during 2006 has generally made good progress,²¹ but there is still a long way to go. By June 2006, only the Doctrine workshop had forwarded a final report to the AU Commission. Moreover, aside from the workshop dealing with doctrine, none of the workshops took the civilian dimension of future ASF operations into account.²²

As stipulated in the policy framework, the standby brigades in each of the five regions will be composed of: a brigade headquarters and support unit; four infantry battalions, plus engineer, reconnaissance, helicopter, military police, logistic, and medical elements – as well as “a civilian support group consisting of logistical, administrative and budget components”. The policy framework also provides for a “roster of civilian experts” to fulfill human rights, humanitarian, governance, demobilisation, disarmament, repatriation and reconstruction tasks. According to initial planning, the ASF would be established in two phases:

- Phase 1 (up to 30 June 2005), during which the objective was to establish an AU headquarters-level PLANELM for the management of limited advisory and observation missions, while the five regions would continue to develop regional standby forces up to brigade size to achieve capabilities for complex missions.
- Phase 2 (1 July 2005 to 30 June 2010), during which the AU will develop the capacity to manage complex peacekeeping operations, while the five regions will continue to develop the capacity to deploy troops and a mission headquarters for such missions.

AU planners decided that the civilian roster of experts is not a Phase 1 priority “because UN humanitarian, development and human rights elements, which do not require a UN Security Council mandate, could deploy in tandem with an ASF mission.” The practical logic of this reasoning is clearly debatable. In fact, while elaborate organisational structures and plans have subsequently been developed for the military standby forces, the AU has conceded that there had been little thinking about broader mission capabilities and civilian leadership “... although police and other civilian capabilities will form important components of the ASF, owing to the absence of a detailed related police/civilian policy, the focus at this stage had to be mainly on the military aspects. ...”²³ Part of the reason for this deficit lies in the fact that the ASF development process continues to be led and dominated by “military experts”. There may also be political and military resistance to addressing the issue of civilian mission leadership – and a reluctance to acknowledge the principle of civil supremacy in peace support.²⁴

THE EU CONTRIBUTION TO BUILDING AU PEACEKEEPING CAPACITY

²¹ A notable exception was the very poor draft ASF Training Policy that emerged from the Luanda workshop in March 2006.

²² According to correspondence from a UK MOD official, reporting on the G8-Africa Peacekeeping Officials Meeting held in Moscow on 8 June 2006.

²³ AU Commission (PSO Division), draft discussion document, Addis Ababa, October 2005.

²⁴ For example, in February 2006 the KAIPTC convened a high-level ECOWAS workshop to deliberate on an appropriate civilian mission management structures for the ECOWAS Standby Force. The ECOWAS Deputy Executive Secretary noted that the workshop provided a forum to discuss a “volatile issue” – that of civilian leadership of future ECOWAS deployments. (Colonel Mahamane Toure had just taken over the reins as ECOWAS DES for Political Affairs, Defence and Security.)

While the focus here is on the EU as an intergovernmental *organization*, it should be noted that individual EU member states are also making significant investments in the peacekeeping capabilities of the AU as an organization – but also to individual AU member states and to groupings of member states through the various Regional Economic Communities (REC) and their corresponding conflict management mechanisms.

Moreover, France, the UK, Germany and Italy ostensibly have a joint approach to capacity building under the G8–Africa action Plan discussed briefly above. And, aside from support to AU missions under the Peace Facility, the EU as an organization has also supported the UN in bolstering the capacity of UN missions in Africa (for example operation Artemis and more recently the EU task force in the DRC).

The most notable contribution to peace operations capacity-building from the EU *qua* EU has been through the Peace Facility, a mechanism which allocated an initial amount of €250 million to the AU for the purpose of financing peacekeeping in Africa.²⁵ The Peace Facility is based on three principles – the first of which is *ownership*, implying that it “... support[s] the African Union and the sub-regional organisations in taking care of African conflicts and stimulating the search for an African continental solution”. This is intended to reinforce the political authority of the AU as well as its technical potential. The €250 million comes from the European Development Fund (EDF) under the Cotonou Agreement. Of this, €126.4 million comes from each African country's contribution of 1.5% from its allocated envelope. The remaining €123.6 million is transferred from unallocated resources (reserves) of the 9th EDF.

The €250 million can be used to finance costs incurred by African countries deploying their peacekeeping forces in one or more other African countries (cost of carrying troops, soldiers' living expenses, development of capabilities, etc.) but is under no circumstances to be used to cover expenditure on hardcore military equipment and weaponry. The AU mission in Darfur, Sudan (AMIS) was the first mission to be supported by the Peace Facility for Africa following a decision in June 2004 for financing amounting to €12 million.²⁶

There are several “pots of money” within the Peace Fund, each of which may be used only for specified purposes. €200 million is to meet the operational costs of peacekeeping missions. €1 million is earmarked for audits, €2 million for evaluations, and €12 million for contingencies. Importantly, in the context of this paper, €35 million is earmarked specifically for capacity building. Typical expenditures under this heading include:

²⁵ The Peace Facility is an instrument with a lifetime of three years from its entry into force (in December 2003). This means that new financial means will have to be found to sustain the Peace Facility from 2007 onwards.

²⁶ Decision 3/2003/CE of the ACP-EC Council of Ministers of 11 December 2003 on the use of resources from the long-term development envelope of the ninth EDF for the creation of a Peace Facility for Africa.

<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/r12529.htm> In response to the request of the African Union (AU), the European Union also established, on 18 July 2005, an EU civilian-military supporting action to AMIS II. The objective of the EU supporting action is to ensure effective and timely EU assistance to support the AMIS II enhancement. See European Union, *Council Joint Action on the European Union civilian-military supporting action to the African Union mission in the Darfur region of Sudan*, Council Joint Action 2005/557/CFSP, OJ L188, 20 July 2005.

- supporting the African Union in the development of a comprehensive peace and security policy;
- supporting the establishment of a relevant planning capability within the AU Peace and Security Directorate;
- supporting the establishment and training of reconnaissance teams to enhance AU and sub-regional potential for the functional preparation of peace keeping operations; and
- enhancing the capacity of the AU and sub-regional organisations in the financial and administrative management of peace keeping operations, either with AU backing or through donor support.²⁷

However, the EU partnership, through the Peace Facility or other means, has failed to produce the most essential ingredient for the “operationalization” of a true AU capability to conduct successful peace operations – a multidimensional peace operations strategy, and the necessary structures to plan operations and implement this strategy.

THE MISSING LINKS

Strategic level mission planning and management capability

According to the preamble to the PSC Protocol, the Heads of State and Government are “desirous of establishing an operational structure for the effective implementation of decisions taken in the areas of conflict prevention, peace-making, peace support operations and intervention ...in accordance with the authority conferred in that regard by Article 5(2) of the Constitutive Act of the Union”. At the strategic level, the authority for mandating and terminating AU peace missions rests with the Peace and Security Council, and responsibility for implementing mandates rests with the Chairperson of the Commission – largely acting through the Commissioner for Peace and Security.²⁸

Article 7 of the PSC Protocol states that the Peace and Security Council, in conjunction with the Chairperson of the Commission, may authorize the *mounting and deployment* of peace support missions. However, the Protocol is silent on the issue of strategic and operational level *planning and management* of such missions. While the main burden of responsibility for the establishment of the ASF has been delegated to the Commissioner for Peace and Security, it is clear that there should also be roles for the other commissioners in the strategic level planning and management

²⁷ European Commission, Securing Peace and Stability for Africa: The EU-funded African Peace Facility, 2004.

²⁸ According to the PSC Protocol, Art. 10 (4): “*In the exercise of his/her functions and powers, the Chairperson of the Commission shall be assisted by the Commissioner in charge of Peace and Security, who shall be responsible for the affairs of the Peace and Security Council. The Chairperson of the Commission shall rely on human and material resources available at the Commission, for servicing and providing support to the Peace and Security Council. In this regard, a Peace and Security Council Secretariat shall be established within the Directorate dealing with conflict prevention, management and resolution.*”

For comparative purposes, the Chairperson of the Commission may be considered as the African equivalent of the UN Secretary-General, and the Commissioner for Peace and Security as roughly equivalent to the UN Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping.

of multidimensional ASF operations – most obviously for the Commissioners assigned to Conflict prevention, management & resolution; Political Affairs; and Human Rights, democracy, Good Governance, elections, civil society, humanitarian affairs & refugees. There is also a special burden of responsibility to be carried by the Chairperson of the Commission himself.

However, to provide for multidimensional strategic level management capability, the ASF Policy Framework simply requires the establishment of 15-person planning elements at the AU HQ and at each of the RECs/Regional HQs. The first Meeting of African Ministers of Defence subsequently recommended the phased establishment of these PLANELMs, with an initial nucleus of only 5 officers to be responsible for pre-deployment management of the ASF and its regional Standby Brigades during phase one.

According to the Roadmap for the Operationalization of the African Standby Force, drafted in March 2005,²⁹ strategic level planning will be conducted by an AU Headquarter-level planning element, to be established through a request by the AU Commission to member States to second five experienced officers for an initial period of one year (from 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006). One officer each should be an expert on: communications and information technology, operations, logistics, standby plans and coordination, and training. These seconded officers are to be located at the AU Commission in Addis Ababa and will constitute the AU PLANELM for Phase 1, working under the PLANELM Chief of Staff. The AU solution is therefore a military one, which has to date exhibited little real planning expertise.

The strategic level planning deficit is an extremely serious one, given the six “mission types” specified in the PSC Protocol, Art. 13 (3), which include “intervention in a Member State in respect of grave circumstances or at the request of a Member State in order to restore peace and security ... “ and “peace-building, including post-conflict disarmament and demobilization”. These are not only “mission types” for the ASF – they imply a multiplicity of activities with profoundly political consequences, that cover the full gamut of conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping, and peace-building – or Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development.

While not a neat fit, the Peace and Security Department can be considered as the rough equivalent of the UN Department of Peace-Keeping Operations. However, within this Department, the AU has created both a Conflict Management Division and a Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD) – which complicates the lines of authority and responsibility for multidimensional mission planning and management. According to extant AU organizational charts, the sole function of the Conflict Management Division is to house the Continental Early Warning System, and there are no direct lines of interaction between this Division and the PSOD. Moreover, the PSC Protocol specifies that “... *a Peace and Security Council Secretariat shall be established within the Directorate dealing with conflict prevention, management and resolution.*”³⁰ It remains unclear as to how the Conflict Management Division, the PSOD and the Peace and Security

²⁹ African Union, Roadmap for the Operationalization of the African Standby Force, Report of the Experts’ Meeting on the Relationship between the AU and the Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Addis Ababa, 22 – 23 March 2005, EXP/AU-RECs/ASF/4(I), par. 10.

³⁰ Article 10 (4).

Council Secretariat relate to one another, and what role they have in the mission planning and management process.

Operational-level mission management

Mission management at the operational level is something which is addressed very briefly in the PSC Protocol, under the rubric of “Chain of Command”³¹:

*“For each operation undertaken by the African Standby Force, the Chairperson of the Commission shall appoint a Special Representative and a Force Commander, whose detailed roles and functions shall be spelt out in appropriate directives, in accordance with the Peace Support Standing Operating Procedures. The Special Representative shall, through appropriate channels, report to the Chairperson of the Commission. The Force Commander shall report to the Special Representative. Contingent Commanders shall report to the Force Commander, while the civilian components shall report to the Special Representative.”*³²

This chain of command is essentially the same as that of UN missions, but the procedure for spelling out the roles and functions of the Special Representative is patently flawed – “in appropriate directives, in accordance with the Peace Support Standing Operating Procedures”. The SOPs are being developed by a group of military experts, without any clear strategic or operational-level guidance with respect to the civilian dimension.

Similar to the challenges at the strategic level of mission management, there is a significant deficit with regard to the civilian mission dimension at the operational level. For example, the ASF concept simply requires the establishment of a mission HQ level management capability in the form of a brigade HQ within each REC/Region. During Phase 1, it was agreed that the nucleus of three officers augmented by non-permanent brigade HQ staff on standby be formed in the respective Member States.

However, there is also recognition in the ASF Policy Framework of the need to establish a multidimensional operational-level HQ that is compatible with comparable UN mission management structures. Paragraph 2.4 states that:

“Given the goal contained in the Protocol establishing the PSC to involve the UN in the conduct of missions in Africa, any mission HQ level structure should be able to be handed over to, or incorporated into, a UN PSO with relative ease. UN structures are subject to rigorous consideration within the Secretariat and in various UN legislative and budgetary bodies. For this reason the Meeting has based its advice on structures used in UN Missions. This approach is consistent with the endorsed recommendations of the Second ACDS Meeting. ...

TOWARDS A MULTIDIMENSIONAL MISSION STRATEGY

In February 2006, the AU Conflict Management Division produced a Draft Policy Framework for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD). This document could provide a sound basis for meeting the urgent need for a multidimensional peace operations strategy and policy. For example, the legal and normative framework for integrated or multidimensional missions is provided as follows:

³¹ Note the military connotation here.

³² PSC Protocol, Art. 13 (6)&(7).

“The AU has a central role to play in consolidating peace and post-conflict reconstruction in Africa. Its mandate derives from past practice of the OAU, from Article 5(2) of the Constitutive Act, on the basis of which the PSC has been established, and from the PSC Protocol. The PSC was created to, inter alia, promote and implement peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction activities and to consolidate peace and prevent the resurgence of violence [Article 3(c)]. In view of this, peace-building, post-conflict reconstruction, humanitarian action and disaster management constitute core activities of the PSC [Article 6 (e) and (f)].

Furthermore, the Protocol delineates a number of post-conflict reconstruction activities that require action, including the restoration of the rule of law, establishment and development of democratic institutions, and the preparation, organisation and supervision of elections in the concerned Member States. For countries affected by violent conflict, the mandate is extended to include the consolidation of the peace agreements that have been negotiated, establishing conditions of political, social and economic reconstruction of the society and government institutions, implementation of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes, including those of child soldiers; resettlement and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons; and assistance to vulnerable persons, including children, the elderly, women and other traumatised groups in society [Article 14(3)].”³³

If this draft document is approved at the political level, it will provide an unambiguous case for strong civilian political leadership of future AU missions. In fact, the policy draft is explicit on the issue:

“PCRD is first and foremost a political rather than a technical process. Therefore, the AU, as the premier continental body charged with providing leadership in the continent, and in the continent’s relations with others, should provide strategic leadership and oversight of PCRD processes, including setting the terms of engagement of all actors involved in PCRD efforts on the continent.”³⁴

However, the question remains: Where, within the Commission, is this strategic leadership to come from? According to the PCRD draft policy, a key “mechanism” for strategic political leadership will be: “An AU Commission inter-departmental taskforce to ensure effective coordination of activities of the Commission, AU liaison and regional offices as well as specialised agencies of the AU dealing with PCRD.”³⁵

The problem is that task forces are typically constituted on an ad hoc basis, which negates the kind of continuity needed for strategic level planning and management tasks to be effectively executed. It is difficult to see the logic behind entrusting strategic leadership and management functions for the entire spectrum of peace support to an *inter-departmental task force*. This responsibility should clearly lie with the same bureaucratic entity that provides the strategic leadership for and oversight of ASF/AU missions in the field. Indeed, this point is reinforced elsewhere in the draft policy, with the statement that:

³³ Draft Policy Framework for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD), February 2006, par. 11 & 12. http://www.iss.org.za/AF/RegOrg/unity_to_union/pdfs/au/PCRDfeb06.pdf

³⁴ Ibid, par. 18 (a). Own emphasis.

³⁵ Ibid, par. 50.

“The AU strategic framework on PCRCD comprises six constitutive elements, namely a) security; b) political governance and transition; c) human rights, justice and reconciliation; d) humanitarian assistance; e) reconstruction and socio-economic development, and f) gender.”³⁶

In other words, the envisaged strategic framework for PCRCD is precisely the same as it should be for multidimensional peace operations. What has blinded AU planners to date is the notion that peace operations strategies and structures can be established in a phased manner, beginning from a modest core of a few middle-ranking military officers who appear to be sadly lacking in strategic vision. This approach has led planners to move on familiar ground – operational-level military issues – and to ignore a fundamental aspect of the guidance provided in the ASF policy framework document (particularly Paragraph 2.1) which states that the generic components of a valid multidimensional peace support operations capability comprise:

- a. A legitimate political capacity to mandate a mission under the UN Charter;
- b. A *multidimensional strategic level management capability*;
- c. A *mission HQ level multidimensional management capability*; and
- d. Mission components for multidimensional peace operations.

CONCLUSION

The AU is slowly forging ahead with the process of establishing a regional peace support capability – most notably, through a series of “expert” workshops designed to deal with military operational-level challenges. However, there is a fundamental disconnect between planning to establish a rapidly-deployable military force to deal with emergencies, and planning to establish an African multidimensional mission capability. Failure to recognize this basic fact has meant that the gap between aspiration and implementation remains extremely wide. The protocols are in place, and institutional structures are slowly being built – but in the absence of a comprehensive peace operations strategy and plan.

The draft documents emerging from the various workshops lack finesse, depth and coherence. They are a *potpourri* of ideas borrowed from a variety of sources, rather than authoritative policy documents based on clear political guidance. It is surprising that the considerable support from the EU and other donor partners is being provided to this process, without any attention being paid to the strategic planning gap, and without any concerted effort being made to clarify the inherent ambiguities in the capacity-building process.

Without clarity on the strategic level mission planning and management structures and decision-making nodes, no meaningful progress can be made with establishing mission management structures and capabilities at the operational level. And the operational and tactical-level SOPs and training plans that are being constructed remain without a firm foundation and without linkages to the higher levels

Rightly or wrongly, the AU has decided to establish a multidimensional peace operations capability at the continental level. But the task of doing this cannot be delegated entirely to a

³⁶ Ibid, par. 23.

series of meetings of middle-ranking military officers and periodic approval of their plans by the ACDS. Multidimensional peace missions require senior civilian leadership, to provide vision and direction to the process of peace implementation (through policies, structures and operating principles). Senior leaders are required to manage complex relationships, to represent the mission within the international community, to conduct contingency and forward planning, and to integrate all efforts through developing and encouraging team work. This is not something that can be achieved by bolting on a “civilian component” to extant ASF structures – a notion that has hitherto been commonly held by the military experts.

It is therefore recommended that the EU and other African donor partners grasp the nettle and, together with the relevant AU Commissioners, confront squarely the challenge of developing a common political-military vision of peace operations and an integrated structure capable of leading and executing future AU/ASF missions with a high degree of success. The entire process of developing capabilities and of using them for multidimensional interventions is a *political* one – a process that can only be effectively driven by visionary and firm political (*civilian*) leadership at all levels of the African Peace and Security Architecture.