

CFSP Watch 2004 – United Kingdom – by Tim Oliver

1. What are the priorities for your government in CFSP in 2004? What are the key issues for your country in 2004 (after EU enlargement, after the Iraq conflict)?

- In early 2004 the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office published 'UK International Priorities: A Strategy for the FCO' (available through the FCO website), a document which set out the UK's foreign policy priorities. The strategic policy priorities are: A world safer from global terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction; Protection of the UK from illegal immigration, drug trafficking and other international crime; An international system based on the rule of law, which is better able to resolve disputes and prevent conflicts; An effective EU in a secure neighbourhood; Promotion of UK economic interests in an open and expanding global economy; Sustainable development, underpinned by democracy, good governance and human rights; Security of UK and global energy supplies; Security and good governance of the UK's Overseas Territories.
- Multilateral institutions such as the EU are seen as a key means by which to achieve most of the above priorities. The document also stresses the links between the US and the EU seeing the transatlantic relationship rooted in economic interdependence, shared democratic values and common security interests. The document also stresses the need for a relationship in which the EU is a credible partner of the US. The role of the UK as a 'transatlantic bridge' remains very much at the forefront of Her Majesty's Government's (HMG) view of Britain's role in foreign affairs.
- The situation in Darfur has been a key concern and seems set to remain so into 2005. HMG supports the EU's support (mainly funding) for the African Union mission in the region. As the second largest bilateral donor in Darfur the UK has been keen to encourage the EU and other Member States to increase their funding.
- The deceleration by Libya that it would renounce terrorism has been seen as a key achievement in 2004, and one where the UK with the EU has been instrumental in bringing about. The UK looks forward to developing better relations with Libya, although the issue of the 1984 shooting dead of Police Officer

Yvonne Fletcher (outside the Libyan Embassy in London) remains a potential source of contention.

- Aside from Iraq, the wider Middle east remains a key concern. HMG has expressed a keen interest in helping the Arab world meet the agenda for change outlined in the UN Development Programme's recent report, including the adoption of democratic reforms. The UK sees Europe's cultural and historic ties to the Muslim world as providing it with unique insights that means the EU must play a central role. HMG has been keen to see progress of the Middle East Peace Process through the Quartet.
- The fight against terrorism and proliferation of WMD remain key concerns of HMG. The implementation of the EU's Action Plans for these areas is keenly supported. The UK recognises that no country can follow such a policy alone, and that the EU must also work with such organisations as the IAEA, OPCW, NATO, and the United Nations Security Council.
- On Russia the UK has been keen to ensure a renewed EU-Russia dialogue on energy. HMG is widely supportive of all efforts by the EU that led to Russia agreeing to sign the Kyoto Protocol on climate change. Concerns remain over human rights and Russia's reaction to the enlargement of NATO and the EU to its borders.
- The situation in Kashmir between India-Pakistan remains a key UK foreign policy concern, covering issues of WMD, immigration, counter-terrorism and trade. Any dialogue through the EU that facilitates better relations between India, Pakistan is welcomed by HMG.
- The UK has worked with the EU, and in particular France and Germany, to address the current situation in Iran with regard to WMD and human rights.
- HMG would welcome the support of the EU in Iraq, especially in preparing for elections and increased development spending.
- The situation in Afghanistan remains a key concern of HMG, especially so with regard to the wider issue of counter-narcotics. Such concerns are addressed in large part through bilateral activities, but also through the EU and UN and in association with the UK Home Office.
- The UK and its diplomatic service are also attaching greater importance to the issue of international crime, something which HMG has also worked through the

EU on. HMG has been keen to work with the EU and other organisations to break down criminal networks rather than focus on specific criminal activities.

- During the latter half of 2005 the United Kingdom will hold the EU Presidency. Throughout 2005 the UK will also be holding the Presidency of the G8. HMG's main CFSP related priorities for the EU Presidency will be to take forward the EU policy agenda in an efficient, effective and impartial way, with a strong emphasis on the agenda which will be inherited from the preceding Dutch and Luxembourg Presidencies. At the same time it seems likely that particular attention will be given to the same priorities as set out for the G8 UK Presidency, these being climate change and Africa. Africa in particular is an area in which Prime Minister Blair has taken a leading role, having established the new Commission for Africa in February 2004. HMG is also keen to further progress with the G8 Plan for Africa, an area in which the EU is seen to play a key role.

2. National Perceptions and Positions with regard to CFSP/ESDP Issues in 2004

- While the general public remains deeply sceptical of the Iraq conflict and the policies of the United States, there are no deep feelings of commitment to the EU and in turn popular support for CFSP/ESDP. Indeed, some have argued that the war in Iraq has made the task of Tony Blair winning referendums on the UK's adoption of the Euro or the European constitution even more difficult than prior to the conflict. The success of the UK Independence Party in the 2004 elections to the European Parliament also demonstrates a healthy level of euroscepticism in British politics and political debate. It is in such a context that any public perceptions of CFSP/ESDP are framed.
- Tony Blair remains committed to CFSP/ESDP in a transatlantic context, emphasising the role of the United Kingdom as a transatlantic bridge. At the same time Blair is still considered to be one of Britain's most pro-European Prime Ministers, a man who *could* commit the UK to the Euro, and who at St Malo in 1998 committed Britain to helping to build improved EU military capabilities. However, again the UK view is that this is within the context of a strong NATO and a transatlantic alliance with the United States.
- The UK remains committed to an enlarged NATO as the only viable defence organisation. The approval in June of a new Headline Goal 2010 has been

welcomed by HMG as a means of addressing interoperability, deployability and sustainability. HMG sees an important role in this for the new European Defence Agency. HMG has repeatedly been keen to ensure that the EU improves its planning links with NATO.

- The UK is comfortable with NATO's involvement in Afghanistan and would welcome further Nato involvement in Iraq. Indeed, the UK was keen to meet the request from Iraqi Prime Minister Allawi for assistance in training the Iraqi security forces. Problems regarding the deployment of troops from some Nato members has raised concerns that this may undermine the unity of Nato's integrated military command.
- For further comment on UK views of the relationship between NATO and ESDP please see the section below detailing Permanent structured cooperation, the proposed mutual defence clause and the civilian-military cell at EUMS.
- On crisis management there is general agreement that the EU and the UK were taught painful lessons in the Balkans from ambitious but meaningless declarations, reliance upon an ambivalent US, ineffective capabilities or use of 'soft power', a lack of leadership thanks to squabbles and internal EU jockeying. The EU is now seen to be making up for lost ground. The UK accepts and pursues a leading role in crisis management. HMG knows that it has armed forces with significant experience/capabilities to deploy. However, the desire for an independent capacity to act comes into play. If necessary the UK will go it alone in crisis management independent of both the EU and UN, e.g. Sierra Leone. Britain has also continually stressed the opportunities NATO offers the EU in terms of crisis management, sighting the Macedonia operation as a good example because it was only possible with NATO assets. The UK is not uneasy with the idea of EU operations in areas beyond the immediate neighborhood of Europe, such as the current operations in the Congo or discussion of committing troops to Darfur. Some further details about UK views of the EU's role in crisis management are provided below in the IGC section detailing expansion to the Petersberg tasks.
- HMG welcomed the European Security Strategy. It is seen as a means by which Europe can begin to heal the wounds of Iraq and to demonstrate the EU's willingness to adopt hard power when required. It is worth noting that the main drafter of the document was Robert Cooper, a former foreign policy adviser to Tony Blair. The UK also strongly supports the idea of conflict prevention rather

than conflict management and resolution, and has since the St Malo declaration of 1998 accepted that the EU requires a mixture of foreign policy instruments including defence and intelligence. In doing so the UK has been keen to ensure that the EU can field more than diplomacy and economic instruments and can play power politics when needed. There has been some limited discussion about the European Security Strategy amongst the UK foreign policy community. However the document generated little or no interest among UK politicians, the media or the public. HMG preferred the document to pass without comment given the sensitivities to European defence issues in both the media and Parliament.

3. The Results of the Intergovernmental Conference 2003/2004 on the Constitutional Treaty

- Most documents and speeches relating to the British approach to the European constitutional Convention and IGC can be found on website of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (www.fco.gov.uk) The UK did not offer any specific documents or detailed proposals with regard to external relations, CFSP or ESDP.
- The UK is in favour of the position of a **European Foreign Minister**, and the President of the European Council. The UK is keen to ensure that the EU External Action Service is under the responsibility of the European Foreign Minister through the Council. The Foreign Minister's role of overseeing the work of the EU External Relations service is seen by the UK as a means of ensuring increased control for the council. HMG has been very keen to ensure that the role of the EU Foreign Minister is carefully defined, seeking to ensure that the European Foreign Minister would be only bound by Commission procedures where this did not conflict with his or her Council mandate.
- HMG supports the position of a **President of the European Council** who would ensure better coordinating the work of Member States in both the European Council and the Council of Ministers. The position is seen as being one that will strengthen the position of the member states in relation to the Commission.
- HMG is not in favour of '**double hating**' whereby the President of the Commission is also the President of the Council.
- HMG is strongly against any moves towards **QMV** in the CFSP area and there is little prospect of change in this respect. At the beginning of the debates in the

European Convention HMG did state that it would consider extension of QMV on a case by case basis stressing that any future decision to move to QMV would have to be made by unanimous agreement in the Council.

- The UK is not in favour of the idea of using **QMV on issues put forward by the EU Foreign Minister**. HMG accepts the need for QMV in some areas of implementation if necessary, as set out under Maastricht (unanimity for foreign policy but some QMV for implementation).
- The UK is in favour of expanding the **Petersberg Tasks**. HMG is very happy to see tasks that involve military resources. Having led a large number of operations the UK appreciates the lack of European military capabilities and the need for it to wield both hard and soft power instruments. HMG would like to see the EU move beyond dealing with the long run problems of crisis management and instead tackle immediate problems, which will require more immediate and effective military instruments. There is a strong desire to go beyond merely 'monitoring the situation'. In achieving this aid and development policy are seen as essential to playing a crucial role working in tandem with foreign and security policy.
- The UK is in favour of the establishment of a **civilian-military cell at EUMS**. The moves by France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg in April 2003 to establish an EU military operations headquarters at Tervuren angered HMG. It was characterised by HMG as an attempt to subvert NATO while providing no real substance or capabilities. However, later in the year at Berlin, Prime Minister Blair was reported as agreeing to a separate planning capacity for the EU. This caused some tension with the US. HMG argues that it is willing to see such a European HQ slowly evolve out of the EU planning cell, but that this should emerge through experience. The UK has now accepted that an EU planning capability should be established, but with close links to NATO. The UK has been keen to make it clear that the EU is not creating a full headquarters but is instead seeking to enhance the EU military staff (EUMS) through a non-permanent cell with civil and military components. HMG's fears that the cell would allow the EU to act autonomously have been allayed by the cell having the implementation of military operations listed as a low ranking priority.
- HMG was initially sceptical of the ideas behind **permanent structured cooperation**. This was based on a number of fears, especially that the original idea was viewed as an example of a hollow gesture that would annoy the

Americans and fail to achieve greater coherence among European forces. HMG feared it would be used to create an avant-garde group of Member States that would be incompatible with the overall workings of the EU. However, HMG's position changed following the Franco-British-German trilateral talks in November 2003. At this meeting HMG seemed to ease its opposition to the proposals, and accepted the idea of a specifically European military headquarters, provided this was integrated with the NATO framework. This approach was confirmed at a meeting on 24 November in London between Prime Minister Blair and French President Jacques Chirac, when the British Prime Minister emphasised that, despite his desire to strengthen European defence, nevertheless 'NATO will remain the cornerstone of our defence'. This change was in part a result of recognition by all that ESDP would need to be built from the bottom up through the development of specialist contributions from EU members. HMG secured assurances that became part of the package, such as the ability of all states to join forms of structured cooperation at any stage. The UK has sought guarantees and reassurances about how member states will qualify for participation in an operation to ensure that the Council has oversight of the initiative. These reflect two of the UK's concerns: first, that the member states should be ready to develop improved defence capabilities. Secondly, in doing so member states should commit themselves to supply by 2007 (through either national contributions or multinational contribution) units to carry out crisis management missions, supported by sufficient transport and logistical capabilities. HMG has therefore appeared to recognise that US leadership in major military operations will not be put at risk by ESDP and structured cooperation. UK views ESDP as only modest in terms of desired military capabilities and the UK should therefore face no significant problems in contributing. For the UK, high intensity military operations will continue to depend on the US. The EU will therefore continue to need to look to NATO and the US to assist in major military operations in the Balkans or near abroad.

- HMG did not support the initial wording of the '**mutual defence**' clause. The UK position is that NATO membership remains the only key to providing collective security. In the British Government White Paper on its approach to the draft constitutional treaty (Cm5934 dated September 2003), HMG's position was clearly set out for Parliament. It said: "We will not, however, support all the proposals as

currently set out in the Convention text. We believe that a flexible, inclusive approach and effective links to NATO are essential to the success of ESDP. We will not agree to anything which is contradictory to, or would replace, the security guarantee established through NATO." This approach was supported by all three main political parties and as a result received very little public discussion. HMG pushed for the eventual deletion of any reference in the draft Treaty to an EU mutual defence commitment which HMG viewed as divisive and a duplication of NATO. The text now makes it clear that for those States which are members of NATO, NATO "remains the foundation of their collective defence" and the instrument for implementing that commitment (Article I-40.7). This is the first time an EU Treaty text has stated this so clearly.

- The UK Government has been a proponent of the **European Defence Agency**, and sees it as an important means through which to improve European capabilities. The UK wants the agency to be "capability led" and follow four operating guidelines: determine the capabilities that are required; evaluate honestly how far short of these capabilities the member states are falling; analyse the way in which gaps can be bridged; lobby, bully and argue for solutions that will overcome deficiencies. It has been working closely with France to ensure that progress is made in this area. The UK will participate, although it is unclear to what extent it will impact on current UK defence programmes. Questions arise as to the extent the UK will want to be seen to give up independent capabilities in both defence development and actual military units. HMG is concerned with the extent to which this will appear to limit the UK's ambitions to maintain an independent capability. The UK defence budget is facing renewed challenges, with the current focus appearing to be more on following US equipment proposals. The UK is aware of US concerns over the sharing of technology which the UK wishes to avoid jeopardising, and it is on these grounds that the opposition Conservative Party opposes the creation of the Agency. UK defence companies also remain torn between co-operation with partners in Europe and the US. HMG also stresses that the Armaments Agency should be responsible to and run by the Member States, and that it is important for the Member States to recognise that possessing the correct capabilities is only useful if they have a willingness to use them.

- The UK would like the **European Defence Agency** to focus upon the development of capabilities and in doing so stresses the central role of Defence Ministers in the agency's decision-making process. This creates something of a tension with the French government who would prefer the Agency to be multi-functional in nature and that this should therefore be taken into account in the composition of the Steering Board. Unlike Britain, France seeks to ensure that the views of other ministries are represented where this is relevant, namely in debating industrial or research questions. HMG has argued that nothing will be achieved unless the 25 member state defence ministries are prepared to buy-in to a shared vision of how Europe's defence capabilities are to develop and how Europe's procurement and technology should be geared in its support. As a result HMG pushes for defence ministers to be on the steering board of the agency and the Secretary -General of the Council of the European Union/High Representative for CFSP to head it so as to avoid parochial concerns. HMG also worries about security in the agency, something based mainly on the possibility of jeopardising the sharing of technology with the US.
- The UK does not view, nor would it support, the Defence Agency as a nucleus for European procurement and a single budget for defence.

4. Mapping of Activities in CFSP-related Research

The UK has a large number of institutions, academics and experts covering European integration, international relations and defence/strategic studies. Many university departments covering politics, international relations, international law, defence/strategic studies have some expertise on CFSP. The strongest centres are LSE (European Foreign Policy Unit), Loughborough and Cambridge, although other places have strong individuals and PhD students.

A detailed list of academic experts can be found in UACES '*Directory of Expertise on Europe: European Studies Research Interests of UACES Members 2004 – 2005*' which includes details of most British academic experts interested in CFSP and ESDP. Major experts listed include Professor Chris Hill (Cambridge), Professor William Wallace (LSE), Dr Karen Smith (LSE), Professor Dave Allen (Loughborough) Professor Brennan (University of Westminster), Professor Anthony Forster (University of Bristol), Professor AJR Groom (University of Kent), Dr Jane Harrold

(Britannia Royal Naval College), Professor Emil Kirchner (University of Essex), Dr Kerry Longhurst (University of Birmingham), Dr Ian Manners (University of Kent), Professor William Patterson (University of Birmingham), Professor John Peterson (University of Glasgow), Dr Alistair Shepherd (University of Wales, Aberystwyth), Professor Richard Whitman (University of Westminster), Dr Neil Winn (University of Leeds), Dr Martin Zaborowski (Aston University), Dr Geoffrey Edwards (University of Cambridge), Professor Richard Gillespie (University of Liverpool),

The leading non-academic research institutions and their associate experts include the Royal Institute for International Affairs (Chatham House), the Foreign Policy Centre (with Mark Leonard), the International Institute for Strategic Studies (with Dr Dana Allin), the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) and the Centre for European Reform (including Charles Grant, Steven Everts, Heather Grabbe and Daniel Keohane). On European issues, which also include discussion of CFSP, see the ESRC 'One Europe or Several?', UACES (University Association for Contemporary European Studies) and the British Foreign Policy Research Centre.