

Security Problems in a Global Age and the Future Course of the Transformation of the Military: French view

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By and large there is a deep rooted feeling in most Europe, that after tackling with the consequences of the collapse of the Soviet bloc and with the Balkan crisis of the 90's, no pressing danger faces Europe from a military standpoint. Of course terrorism and weapons of mass destruction are often mentioned as preoccupying factors. However, the former is mainly an issue for police and intelligence services, and the later is less immediate after the blunder about Iraqi WMD and the progressive normalization of political relationship between the Western world with Libya and Iran and, possibly, North Korea. This state of affairs explain in large part the limited financial resources currently devoted for defense spending in Europe, with the exception of very few countries such as France or the United Kingdom.

From a threat perception analysis, there is a widespread feeling that Europe has entered into a period of "strategic pause" for a certain period of times. As such key parameters used to frame French defense policy remains almost the same since 1994 when they were, then, defined and outlined in a White Paper on defense: deterrence, prevention, protection and projection of forces.

The current situation does not means however that military forces are not involved in operations. In October 2003 about 40 000 French soldiers were deployed overseas, either for military operations (4000 in Ivory Coast; 3200 in Kosovo; 1200 in Bosnia-Herzegovina; 1000 in Central Asia in relationship with Afghanistan) or permanently based according to the concept of prevention. In Britain, as well, conventional forces with their various commitments, to begin with occupying Iraq, are over-stretched.

If there is a "strategic pause" there are however pressing needs. Two are of a particular importance. The first one is to give flesh to the nascent European defense policy.

The second is to cope with the military-technological evolution going on in America in order to better understand the significance of the “transformation” going on in the Pentagon and to remain co-operable with US forces.

The European Security and Defense policy (ESD)

The European construction represents a fascinating endeavour. Without any historical precedent, it combines federalist aspirations with a sense of confederalism when at the same time it maintains nations at the core of the process. As pointed out by French president Jacques Chirac during a speech in Germany in spring 2000 “*our nations are at the root of our identity...The diversity of their political, cultural, and linguistic traditions is a strength for the Union. For peoples, nations will remind their first reference. To call for their extinction would be as ridiculous as to negate that they have chosen to exercise in common part of their sovereignty*”¹. For already almost 50 years, at least for the initial six nations signatories of the Rome Treaty², each country of the Union has undergone substantial political, economical, juridical, structural and even “cultural” transformations for the sake of the European construction. Sparing very few domains, this construction has reached a qualitative dimension that make the Union a centre of power in a multilateral world.

The concept of “European defence” dates back to the aftermath of WWII. With the Brussels treaty³, France, the United Kingdom and the Benelux countries gave birth to this project in concluding a defensive alliance aimed at countering the growing threat emanating from the Soviet Union. The European allies began to set up a military structure in order to be able to plan and execute military operation if necessary. The lack of resources rapidly compelled the Europeans to knock at Washington’s door in order to keep the Americans committed to the defence of Western Europe. When creating the military integrated structure of the Atlantic alliance, it was obvious that a pre-eminent role would be then given, in the alliance, to the US both in term of leadership as well in military affairs. As a consequence of that situation the signatories of the Brussels treaty renounced their own military arrangement to the benefit of Nato. A second attempt to build a new form of “European defence”, although within the framework of the Atlantic

¹ Jacques Chirac, speech at the Bundestag, June 27, 2000, Berlin.

² France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxemburg.

³ March 25, 1948. Conceived largely as a response to Soviet moves to impose control over the countries of Central Europe, the Treaty represented the first attempt to translate into practical arrangements some of the ideals of the European movement. Its main feature was the commitment to mutual defence should any of the signatories be the victim of an armed attack in Europe. In September 1948, military co-operation was initiated in the framework of the Brussels Treaty Organisation. A plan for common defence was adopted, involving the integration of air defences and a joint command organisation with marshal Montgomery as the commander in chief.

alliance and without British participation, was initiated through the EDC project (European Defence Community). The scheme failed in the summer of 1954 when the French parliament rejected the idea however originated in France. After that failure, the European construction was then re-focused on its civilian aspects as laid out in the Rome treaty (1957) which initial purpose was about economic and trade integration among the members states of the newly created EEC (European Economic Community).

The changing of the international scene in the 80's called for a transformation of the EEC. In addition, growing frictions between the West Europeans and the US since the early 70's; the realization that the gap between the two sides of the Atlantic in trade and GNP⁴ was going to be closing did call for adjustment in the various domains covered by the transatlantic relationship. In many domain, if the Europeans became major players as exemplified in high tech products such as mobile telephony (GSM standards), Airbus, Ariane space launcher, etc.... they still remained excessively dependent on the US in defence matters. In addition, the growing sense of unity among EEC countries reinforced the idea that sooner than later they would have to re-start the plans for a European defence.

The initial move resulted from an initiative of the Belgian and French Governments which led to the "Rome Declaration"⁵ calling for a WEU⁶'s reactivation since "*the continuing necessity to strengthen western security, and the better utilization of WEU would not only contribute to the security of Western Europe but also to an improvement in the common defence of all the countries of the Atlantic Alliance*". From that starting point, the Franco-German entente led to resurrect the idea of a "European defence" which became a new goal for the West Europeans. As stated in the WEU's "Hague Platform on European Security"⁷ preamble "*We are convinced that the construction of an integrated Europe will remain incomplete as long as it does not include security and defence*".

The growing interdependence within the EEC, the transformation of the international

⁴ In 1961 the combined GNP of the then 6 members of the EEC amounted to roughly 37% of the US GNP. Forty two years later the combined GNP of those 6 members amounted to 54% of the US and to 87% when combined with the others countries of the EU at 15. In may 2004, 10 new members have joined the EU whose GNP is similar to the US one

⁵ October 27, 1984.

⁶ The Western European Union is deriving from the Brussels treaty of 1948.

⁷ October 27, 1987.

scene and the strategic upheavals of the early 90's led to acknowledge that the European construction has to be considerably deepened to remain effective in coping with new issues and challenges. The Maastricht (1991) and Amsterdam (1997) treaties led to the European Union which transformed qualitatively the European project, initially based on functional development of the EEC, into a full political project aimed at creating an unprecedented type, in historical terms, of confederation/federation between sovereign States. The aims are to enhance and maximize the benefits of the Union for its citizen, its economy, its prosperity and makes the EU a full part actor on the world stage when new risks and challenges may deeply affect international stability and its own security. It was then agreed that the EU, as such, needed to be able to work on the international scene and back its diplomacy by military means. The Maastricht and the Amsterdam treaties defined in broad terms the scope and the purpose of the future ESDP (European Security and Defence Policy). Even if the purpose of ESDP was laid out and the legal basis for its completion were agreed in the early 90's, the project appeared initially deadlocked due to political and strategic divergences on how to proceed and how far should the Europeans go in terms of ESDP. The real start of ESDP was concretely initiated at the Franco-British meeting in Saint-Malo in December 1998 which opened the doors for a first cycle of European defence integration which was unfortunately closed by the Iraqi crisis in 2002-2003.

Current state of the ESDP

The EU does possess an agenda which is to give the EU a say in world affairs :” *We, the members of the European Council, are resolved that the European Union shall play its full role on the international stage*”⁸. It implies in military affairs that the EU acquires the capacities and the capabilities, at the strategic level, to independently assess a crisis, assess its potential military implications, to plans if necessary military operation and execute this operation in using European assets: “*..we are convinced that the Council should have the ability to take decisions on the full range of conflict prevention and crisis management....This requires a capacity for autonomous action backed up by credible military capabilities and appropriate decision making bodies... the EU will need a capacity for analysis of situations, sources of intelligence, and a capability for relevant strategic planning*”⁹. Such emphasis on the imperative to develop means and capacities to allow the EU to launch, if the needs arise, autonomous military action has led EU members to develop appropriate political-military structures as well as

⁸ European Council declaration on Strengthening the Common European Policy on Security and Defence, Cologne European Council, Germany, 3-4 June 1999.

⁹ *ibid.* Since then, those objectives have been reiterated at various European Council meetings.

new military tools¹⁰ to fulfil the goals assigned to ESDP. Accordingly, today, the Europeans have set up relevant political-military structures to assess, decide, plan and implement military operations. Although, they are in their infancy, these structures have been tested, in 2003, at the occasion of two military operations: *Concordia* and *Artemis*.

Concordia has been a EU military operation with Nato assets launched after the UNSC vote resolution 1371 for stabilizing a complex situation in Western part of Macedonia in the Balkans. A small EU force (about 400 men) was dispatched under a command structure which was provided at the strategic level by Nato (EU led operation with Nato support). This was made possible after the EU finally reached an agreement with Nato regarding the implementation of EU led military operation when using Nato assets, i.e. basically US assets. This was the result of the Prague summit of the Atlantic alliance, in December 2002, which made possible the so-called completion of the Berlin Plus agreement¹¹. The political control and strategic directive were provided by the PSC (*Political and Security Committee*) of the EU when the commander of the operation at the strategic level was provided by Nato when an EU OHQ (Operational Headquarters) was set up at SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe) under the supervision of the deputy SACEUR (Admiral Feist, a European Officer). The command of the force in Macedonia was established in Skopje (general Maral from France).

In the case of operation *Artemis*, the operation was fully controlled and managed by the Europeans. The European Union (EU) launched the operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1484 (May 30, 2003) and the European Council's Joint Action adopted on June 5, 2003. The UN Resolution authorised the deployment of an interim emergency multinational force in Bunia (Ituri region in DRC) until September 1, 2003. The purpose of the operation was aimed at contributing to the stabilisation of the security conditions and the improvement of the humanitarian situation in Bunia. France acted as the "Framework Nation" for the operation and used some component of its strategic command structure (the CPCO-*Centre de Planification et de Conduite des Operations*) which was "Europeanised" with the inclusion of about 30 officers coming from EU's countries in complement of the 50 French officers involved. An operational EU HQ was also established in Entebbe (Uganda) to directly direct the operation under the command of general Jean-Paul Thonier¹².

¹⁰ Such as the ERRF (European Rapid Reaction Force).

¹¹ That is to say that Nato agreed to give part of its assets to the EU for military operations. This situation implies obviously a "*droit de regard*" of the Alliance on the conduct of the operation.

¹² Jean-Paul Thonier is the head (2004) of the French 9th light armoured brigade.

As a sign of deeper commitment of European countries for the sake of ESDP, it shall be noticed that, at the occasion of operation *Artemis*, Sweden dispatched, for the first time, some of its special forces in the heart of Africa. The case of Sweden is particularly noticeable since it highlights the present dilemma facing many medium sized countries in the EU. Strong tendencies still exist about maintaining the traditional defence policy of Sweden, strong inclination are also manifested towards the USA in military affairs but now Stockholm also expresses the growing sense that Sweden cannot be left out on what is going on in ESDP. In the field of defence industries, in the field of force's transformation, Sweden is slowly moving towards a growing implication in ESDP¹³.

New challenges

The first challenge is to overcome the wounds caused by the fall out of the Iraqi crisis. Europe has then been split into two opposed camps. That situation has poisoned the European summit held in Brussels, in December 2003 which was supposed to adopt a new modus operandi of the Union when it will have 25 members. The development of a genuine European defence does not avoid the traditional political difficulties related to the European construction. Different understanding of the nature of the EU are not only related to different interest they are also directly linked to different historical experience within the European construction. Few countries are in the process since almost fifty five years, some are not even full members of the Union. As mentioned by the French president, Jacques Chirac: "*Europe...is not a freeway on which everyone can move fast. It is a steep and difficult mountain....some walk a bit faster, some more slowly because they are tired, others twist their ankles in a hole. But, we have never turned back*"¹⁴. This is the case in various domains like trade, economy and monetary affairs as illustrated with the present status of the *euro*.

The prospect that, for a certain period of time heterogeneity will prevail in the field of high tech industries, military power etc. will almost certainly led, within ESDP, to the apparition of a "pioneer group". The Brussels meeting of April 2003¹⁵ deciding the creation of a European strategic headquarters possibly based at Tervuren (Belgium) left open to the others members of the EU is a foretaste of that evolution. Britain, due to

¹³ In January 2004, Saab Aerosystems from Sweden has signed an agreement with Dassault Aviation from France to collaborate on a programme for an unmanned combat air vehicle demonstrator (UCAV) launched in June 2003 by Paris.

¹⁴ Jacques Chirac, interview with *The New York Times*, September 22, 2003.

¹⁵ The meeting was held in the midst of the Iraqi war on April 29, 2003 between France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg.

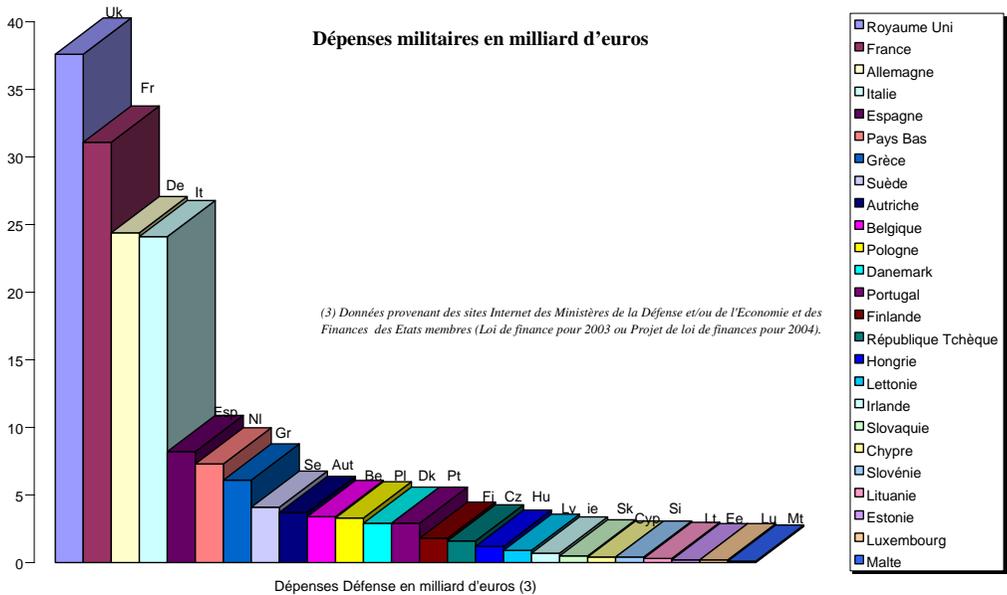
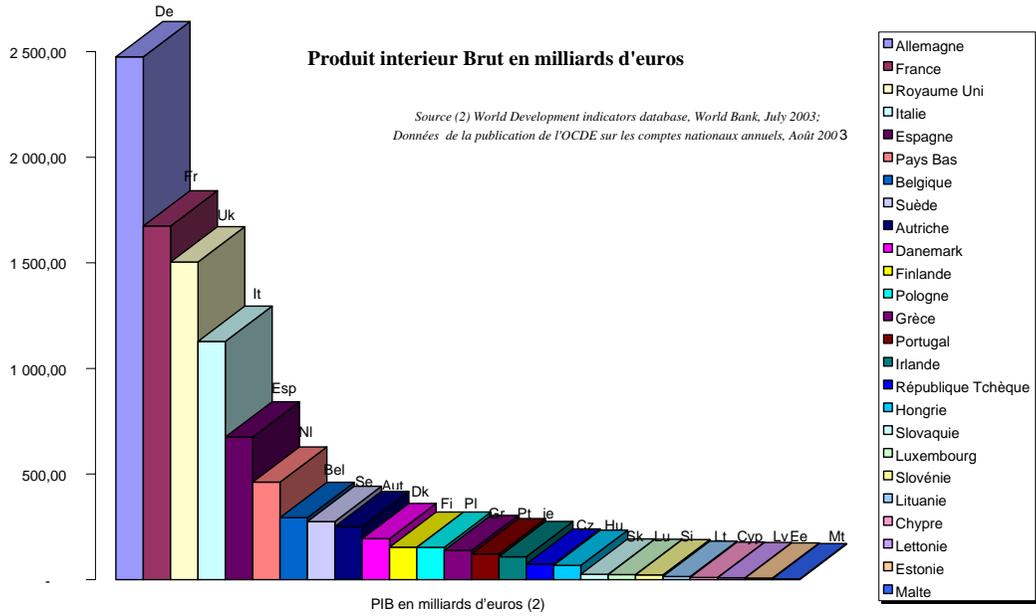
limitations on its strategic freedom of manoeuvre, as a price to its special relationship with the US, will certainly join the process but later although already having an eye on what is planned to give birth to this inevitable process. If Britain remained initially opposed to plans to set up a new EU military HQ, it later acknowledged that "structured cooperation" outlined in the draft of the EU constitution should be possible in defence. At a September 2003 meeting between Gerhard Schröder Jacques Chirac and Tony Blair the three leaders indeed agreed that "*The European Union should be endowed with a joint capacity to plan and conduct operations without recourse to Nato resource and capabilities. Our goal remains to achieve such a planning and implementation capacity either by consensus with the 25 [members states] but also in a circle of interested partners*"¹⁶.

Such cooperation would let any members of the EU who wanted to move ahead with defence initiatives to do it without waiting for the agreement of non-participants that remain free to join the process sooner or later. A second cycle of European defence construction will then be opened. In the process most member states will, in a EU framework, regain their lost capacity to think strategically, to understand a crisis strategically and if necessary to protect the collective interest of the EU with an unsurpassed efficiency. Additionally, this will greatly enhanced the overall capacity of the Atlantic alliance.

The second challenge in the domain of ESDP will be about reconciling very different situation in military affairs throughout European Union. Indeed, how will it be possible to make further progress when exists in Europe a huge heterogeneity of situation: in manpower, in defence budget, and in capacities? Of course, each nation of the EU has an equal say to the development of the European defence. The principle of reality comes however to affect that perspective. In military affairs, only very few EU's countries have capabilities to plan and execute military operations at the strategic and operative level¹⁷. Most of them have now so few resources that they can, at best, only act at the upper level of tactical engagement but certainly not above. This objective situation leaves huge responsibilities on a very limited number of countries to push and lead for further development of EU military capabilities at the various spectrum of military activities.

¹⁶ Internal document approved at the Berlin meeting between Tony Blair, Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schröder, September 20, 2003, "Blair backs more EU defence co-operation", Bertrand Benoit, Ben Hall, *Financial Times*, September 22, 2003.

¹⁷ The UK with its Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ), France with the CPCO and Germany with its *Einsatzführungskommando* (EfuKdo) are the only countries, within the EU ,to possess the capabilities to plan and conduct military operations at the operative and strategic level



The third challenge for the Europeans is to remain able to cope with the ongoing military-technical revolution: new complex weapon systems are needed particularly in the field of intelligence, planning military operation and information dominance. This will require to develop and built complex weapons systems. To reach that capability the Europeans will have in a concrete manner to overcome the difficult question of pulling together R&T resources in the context of low defence spending. Limits on defence spending will probably led, at the occasion of a future new cycle of deepening ESDP towards mutualisation of forces and later on force specialisation having then defined common doctrine and operational guidance.

Already, gradually the Europeans are, either nationally or collectively, developing tools that will be of paramount importance in the future to fulfil the goals of strategic autonomy. As an example, in the domain of intelligence satellites, they will have about 15 reconnaissance satellites (including dual-use ones) in the next 5 years. In navigation systems the development of the Galileo satellite systems will give a tremendous impetus to what will be possible, autonomously, by European forces from pure navigation to planning long range strike. Step by step the European defence is thus on the move.

The US military “Transformation” and the Europeans

Europeans. US views on future warfare strongly influenced by processing combat intelligence in a revolutionary manner epitomized in the notion of “network centric warfare”, are supposed to become the standard views in Europe. In emphasizing technology as the main driver of military action, it was easy to highlight the significance of an apparent gap between the two sides of the Atlantic. Indeed, Western Europe is outspent by a ratio of almost 1 to 3 in favour of the US whose expenditure in military R&D in 2002 surpassed Germany’s entire defence budget. Closing the “gap” may of course also meets the expectation of key European defence companies eager to stabilize a declining market and enter the US defence market.

West Europeans are urged to close a “gap” between capabilities of their armed forces and those of the United States, a song as old as the Atlantic alliance itself. The Nato summit in Prague in December 2003 has been a renewed opportunity for US leaders, backed by then Nato’s Secretary general lord Robertson, to remind once more time how “disgraceful” the Europeans are in avoiding to correct a capability gap widening with US forces and take that opportunity to “transform” their armed forces. Once again the

Europeans are offered to radically transform their military posture in rallying prescription stemming out from “visions” elaborated by the US military. The Atlantic alliance should thus be transformed in a unified zone in strategic and defence affairs under American leadership. Technological progress became a substitute to an identified threat to push military integration within the Atlantic area to a magnitude never seen even during the Soviet threat era. The mirage of high-tech solutions, as the panacea to military problems, is thus being sold to the Europeans. US views on future warfare epitomized in the notion of “network centric warfare”, is supposed to become the standard views in Europe as well.

In front of US innovation related to new mode of warfare based on the intense use of a sophisticated and complex systems of C4ISR, should the Europeans follow the inclination taken by US military forces or should they invent a proper “grammar” of warfare which could better correspond to their views on warfare?

This question is at the heart of the transatlantic debate about a “gap” between US and European forces. If the Europeans rallied to US prescription and choose to be part of the “system of systems” developed by the US they run the risk of a greater dependence on the United States, Washington being the sole holder of the “keys” of the “system of systems” which is the essence of “network centric warfare”. Is it a coherent policy at a time when the European Union is trying to acquire a political role and influence on the international scene?

Indeed the Europeans have the military competence and most of the technological know-how to develop by themselves high tech military systems as they were able to compete efficiently on world markets in civilians high tech goods. They have however to invent a model of warfare “made in Europe” specifically tailored to the needs of the European Union with probably less over emphasize on technology than in the US. They have to collectively work since the double pressure of weapons costs and complexity of high tech weapons systems notably in the fields of “enablers” particularly complex C4ISR systems that are becoming out of the reach of any single EU countries in the context of low defence budget. The common development of these “enablers” will not only provide ESDP with adequate means to conduct military operations on a large scale, they will also highly facilitate the emergence a this new “grammar of warfare” made in Europe already mentioned.

Already signs indicate a unexpected strong resolve in high tech fields from the Europeans as seen with the Galileo project to develop and built navigation satellites decided despite US lack of sympathy and hard lobbying to kill the project. An attempt

badly felt on this side of the Atlantic. When US prescriptions are followed, it sometimes has damaging effects for Europe as seen with the JSF (Joint Strike Fighter) program. Three members of the EU, UK, Italy and the Netherlands, will indeed divert from EU's R&T resources almost 4 bn \$ that will go to the US. A financial investment that will greatly benefit US companies at the detriment of EU's capacities when European research programs aimed precisely at closing the gap in R&T such as ETAP (European Technology Access Program) would need in the years ahead greater investments. ETAP represents now the last ditch against the disastrous situation created for the Europeans with choices made on the JSF. ETAP is aimed at working, in basic research on a next generation of combat air systems, including UCAV. It may receive around 600 million of Euro between 2002 and 2009 from the six European nations part of it.

Undoubtedly, if there is a necessity for the Europeans to avoid any gap making impossible for their forces to co-operate with those of the US there is a line to draw between this imperative and the unacceptable political consequences of technological choices that create dependencies.

Technological and technical approaches about new ways of warfare, the example of NWC

The concept of "Network Centric Warfare" (NCW) is seldom used in France even though from a technological and technical points of view, works are being done to give French armed forces the capacities and the capabilities to work and fight on the digitalized battlefield. However, the technical imperatives deriving from the need to operate on a new complex battlefield have to be related to political and strategic considerations which impact on the overall understanding of the NCW.

In military affairs, there is the growing need for speeding up the tempo of operations. Rapid success on the battlefield destabilized a slower adversary unable to cope with the momentum of the fight minimized casualties and destruction and met Western public opinion aspiration to limit the duration of large scale military operations on a theater of war. France is part of the current transformation of most Western armed forces in order to give them greater latitude to operate on the 21st century battlefield. Each branch of the French armed forces is going through a more incremental rather a revolutionary development of NWC.

The basic idea behind the new way of warfare is based on collecting, processing and sharing pertinent information. As such this imperative is part of the modernization of French armed forces being currently done under the five years defense program 2003-2008

(*Loi de programmation militaire- LPM 2003-2008*). This law is part of a greater endeavor which is to built French forces in accordance to the 2015 model (*modèle d'armée 2015*). Three objectives have been assigned to the current LPM which as such are not immediately dedicated to NWC. The first objective is to restore the availability of equipments; modernization and preparation of future equipments; consolidate the professionalization of the armed forces.

Regarding the construction and the modernization of new equipment, the priorities of the LPM are the following:

- the arrival in the forces the third SLBM of the new generation with the building of the 4th; the development of the new supersonic cruise missile (ASMP-A) with new nuclear warhead; the construction of a new high power laser for nuclear simulation.

French SSBNs 2004-2008

SNLE <i>L'Inflexible</i> , 8920 tonnes of displacement	Operational in 1985, phased out in 2006	16 MSBS M4B MIRVED each with 6 TN70/71 warhead (yield of 150kt) and penetration aids	Range of the missile: about 4000 Km
SNLE-NG <i>Le Triomphant</i> 15000 tonnes of displacement	Operational in 1997	16 MSBS M45 MIRVED each with 6 TN 75 warhead and penetration aids	Range of the missile: about 4000 Km
SNLE-NG <i>Le Téméraire</i> 15000 tonnes of displacement	Operational in 1999	16 MSBS M45 MIRVED each with 6 TN 75 and penetration aids	Range of the missile: about 4000 Km
SNLE-NG <i>Le Vigilant</i> 15000 tonnes of displacement	Operational in 2004	16 MSBS M45 MIRVED each with 6 TN 75 and penetration aids	Range of the missile: about 4000 Km
SNLE-NG <i>Le Terrible</i> 15000 tonnes of displacement	Operational in 2008	16 MSBS M51 MIRVED each with 6 TN 75 and penetration aids. In 2015 the "TNO" warhead will replace the TN 75	Range of the missile: about 6000 Km

- The acquisition of proper means of command, control and communication for giving France the capacity at the strategic level (development of the new HQ CPCO- Centre de Planification et de Conduite des Opérations); operative level (Syracuse III military telecommunication satellite) and tactical level (digitalization and modernization of telecommunication systems) to be a frame work nation in the context of EU led military operations.
- Development and modernization of intelligence gathering systems: launching of Helios II reconnaissance satellites in 2004 and 2008; reconnaissance UAV (medium endurance); new Elint/Commint ship.
- Improvement of force projection with the command of a second aircraft carrier, new transport aircraft (A400M ordered), helicopter (NH90, Cougar) and two LHD (delivered in 2005 and 2006).
- Deep strike improvement with the delivery of 57 Rafale for the Air Force, 19 for the Navy and 500 cruise missile SCALP-EG.
- The improvement of the land forces capabilities with in particular the delivery of 117 new Leclerc MBT, 37 Tigre attack helicopter and 10 new Cobra counter artillery radars. The new Félin equipment for the infantry fight on the digitalized battlefield will be delivered (14 000 systems).
- Two Horizon Frigates will be delivered, a third E2C-Hawkeye, and 8 multi mission frigates will be ordered.
- A renewed effort on military R&T will be accomplished: 7,07 Bn of euro will be spent during the LPM.

In this later domain of R&T the French will try to work on developing an “Airland” system of NWC, called BOA (*Bulle Opérationnelle Aéroterre*). The BOA is aimed at developing cooperative combat system for ground forces. It is built around different types of sensors based on different type of materials (mobile or fixed) capable of collecting and disseminating information. The “shooters” will used in a cooperative manners the available information. In order to establish proper communication a network will be created. A preliminary study n the feasibility of the IP (Internet Protocol) has been realized under the aegis of the DGA (*Délégation Générale pour l’Armement*). This Study known as ATTILA, realized by Thalès, was aimed at drawing up a master plan for migrating tactical and joint theater networks to internet technology. The recommendation resulting from the Attila study has to be consolidated and embedded in new weapons systems. France, which is part of Nato’s twelve nation TACOMS Post 2000 project has submitted the result of the Attila study.

Conclusion

European countries are now confronted with the question of compatibility of their force posture with the American one either within Nato or in the framework of ESDP. If Washington is moving towards the “transformation” of part of its military forces, what shall be the European attitude? Should the Europeans, for the sake of interoperability, follow US leads when no single European nation have enough resources to develop a full “transformational” force? Would it be satisfactorily to have only "niches" in the US "system of systems"? Would it be compatible with the place and role EU wishes to play on the international scene if it remains only capable of providing forces, mainly on the ground, dependant of intelligence and flows of data processed by US forces ?

The question there is not so much linked to the future characteristic of armed conflicts but on the political significance of military choices. Indeed, there are already enough know-how and experiences in Europe about the various type of military conflicts from peace keeping operations to high intensity combat as well as high-tech know-how to develop a military posture within ESDP which does not need to mirror the US posture but, more fundamentally, relates directly to the political and strategic needs of the EU.

In a sense, “transformation”, the new catch-all word about defense and security affairs in the United States, addresses the obvious: the military is not isolated from other human activities, which are in a permanent state of flux. Political, cultural, societal, industrial and technological “transformations” have always had a direct impact on military affairs, as demonstrated in many historical examples. With the growing importance of information technologies in post-modern societies, the military cannot escape adapting defense structure, adjusting doctrine and developing new weapon systems in order to maximize the processing and sharing of time urgent information.

Despite the immediate seductiveness of this notion, which promises to pave the way to a new kind of “Blitzkrieg” for the early 21st century -as implied in military concepts inherent to “transformation” such as Rapid Decisive Operation (RDO) problems arise for US allies with its multi-faceted nature.

On one hand, transformation is aimed at revolutionizing the conception of warfare itself. As such it transcends national boundaries. For Europeans, it is of the greatest importance, from a purely military sense, to understand its implications for defense and develop cooperation with the US. Nato is not necessarily the best vehicle for that

cooperation. A new multilateral body like the Multinational Interoperability Council (MIC) seem to offer better perspectives for Germany, the UK and France, the three key West European military players. The three have taken very seriously, from a military viewpoint, the need to remain co-operable with the US when America is embarked in the “transformation” of its military forces and doctrines. Berlin, London and Paris commit significant resources to that goal..

On the other hand “transformation” is so grounded in American military culture, bureaucratic incentives and political perspectives that many of its concerns, applications and implications outside the US remain potentially very limited. Stemming from these contrasted views, “transformation” will undoubtedly nurture as much attractiveness as misunderstandings between the United States and its European allies.

Indeed, one of the crucial difficulty that has now to be transcended between America and the EU is closely related to diverse if not divergent cultural influences that shape their respective vision of the world. Common grids of lecture are lacking for analysing an ever increasingly rapid and complex international transformation, either to understand their origin or to envisage their potential political, strategical and military consequences.