Background Note – Capability Development Plan

The EDA Long-Term Vision (LTV) report outlined the sort of capabilities which Europe’s armed forces would need for possible European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) military operations in the future. The broad endorsement of the LTV by EU Defence Ministers in October 2006 provided a solid foundation for ESDP capability development activities to be taken forward within a short-to-longer term perspective and set the baseline for an unique enterprise: to create a comprehensive and auditable overview of military capability trends and requirements, from today to 2025 and beyond, across all envisaged ESDP missions.

In order to start this endeavour, the EDA Steering Board at the end of 2006 tasked the EDA to establish an ESDP Capability Development Plan (CDP), based on the Headline Goal 2010 process and the LTV, conducting a more detailed and evidence-based analysis of future capability needs and the mutual disclosure of national medium-to-long term planning.

The detailed aim of the CDP were described as
- to make the LTV capability guidance more specific (and thus more useful);
- to identify priorities for capability development; and
- to bring out opportunities to pool and cooperate.

The work was divided into four major strands:
- Establishing the baseline of shortfalls against the Headline Goal 2010 and their relative priority;
- Developing the LTV capability guidance, by testing the main hypotheses against “alternative futures” and by a series of capability studies on key issues;
- Collating a database of Member States’ current defence plans and programmes;
- Harvesting lessons for future capability from current experience.

The work itself was taken forward in a series of workshops and working group meetings, mainly chaired by the EDA. It has been a most successful co-operative effort by all 26 pMS, committed to a single objective and supported by the EU Military Committee, the EU Military Staff, the General Secretariat of the Council. As might be expected for such a complex exercise, wide consultation, coordination and commitment were required.

The initial CDP was presented to the EDA Steering Board on 8 July 2008. It will be a cornerstone of the Agency’s activities as it defines a framework for European governments to work together to improve the military capabilities required for ESDP operations now and beyond, including priorities and actions to undertake.

The CDP is a unique tool, developed by the EDA’s participating Member States for use by the participating Member States. It provides a significant corpus of analysis of
capability needs, capability trends and potential capability shortfalls up to 2025 and a database of national plans and priorities which will help pMS to identify and exploit areas of common interest.

Although the development of the CDP in such a short time must be considered as a remarkable achievement by the pMS, it should be seen as one of a number of components, albeit a crucial one, of a wider objective to develop an end-to-end, capability-based process within the EU in order to converge towards a more common understanding of military needs in the 21st Century. Where the CDP succeeds in adding is in assisting all pMS to develop their national capability plans in an appropriate balance of forces against ambition and resources, whilst providing a catalyst to identify and launch multinational collaborations for the development of new and enhanced capabilities. Therefore, the CDP is not, and must not be seen as, a Brussels-driven supranational plan with an aspiration to replace national decision-making.

With this shared sense of vision, the CDP attempts to address the well-documented fragmentation in demand for European military capabilities - the lack of harmonised military requirements and comprehensive priorities - whilst trying to evolve from a culture which focused too much on force size and not enough on the mutual dependency of the determinant factors contributing to capability. It does this by identifying risks and challenges facing Member States across the full range of ESDP missions, from the defined Headline Goal military requirements and lessons from recent and current operations, to the potential but less tangible longer-term needs. It examines possible trends in the global strategic factors such as technology, demography, economy, global governance, to mention just a few, but considers them within the complex and unpredictable global security context highlighted in the LTV. Moreover, it takes into account a structured assessment of potential adversaries - not who or where, but what and how. A capability-based process is not an antidote to uncertainty that divorces threat and capabilities. It is necessary to integrate threat into planning in order to determine the necessary quality and, at times, quantity. Clearly it is difficult to undertake such an assessment but that does not suggest it should not be tried. The CDP takes on this challenge by providing a starting point for future debate and deliberations.

Taking all the detailed analyses into account, pMS identified the following as the principal conclusions emerging from this initial CDP:

- A clear and enduring need for appropriate conceptual work to support capability development.
- The need for persistent intelligence to support modern knowledge-based operations in complex environments, including full spectrum awareness, robust networks and appropriate architectures.
- The requirement for adaptive and co-ordinated inter-agency structures in order to support a comprehensive approach to EU crisis management operations.
- The necessity to maintain the initiative against a broad range of possible adversaries that are technically and conceptually agile and who will not be constrained by legal and western societal norms.
- The need for ever-greater flexibility, agility and responsiveness in order to be able to deliver the precise effects at the right time and place.
• The human factor - the most critical requirement to recruit, train and retain a motivated workforce to meet the most demanding challenges.

Based on these conclusions, the participating Member States have agreed on a first series of actions in order to operationalize the findings of the CDP. With a wide remit to tackle real-time operational risks and recalibrate the future capability mix in order to reflect the uncertainty times that lie ahead. Some new capabilities are extremely expensive and raise complex investment issues. What could be given up in order to generate a future force that has more rather than less relevant defence capabilities? What could be a more appropriate balance of investment, and what force options could make the most sense? These questions involve difficult but important choices and must be answered at all levels, from tactical to strategic.

The endorsement of the initial CDP and its emerging actions demonstrate clearly the determination and commitment of pMS to make Europe more military capable.

The CDP is significant and unique but must be considered only as a starting point, to be further refined and regularly reassessed to ensure it remains pertinent and useful. The journey towards a more relevant capability development process in Europe is well underway. It is a long road, but the delivery of the Capability Development Plan clearly demonstrates that there is much to be optimistic about.

List of topics for specific action:

**INITIAL TRANCHE OF 12 SELECTED ACTIONS**

1. **COUNTER MAN PORTABLE AIR DEFENCE SYSTEMS**
2. **COMPUTER NETWORK OPERATIONS**
3. **MINE COUNTER-MEASURES IN LITTORAL SEA AREAS**
4. **COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH - MILITARY IMPLICATIONS**
5. **MILITARY HUMAN INTELLIGENCE AND CULTURAL / LANGUAGE TRAINING**
6. **INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE, TARGET ACQUISITION AND RECONNAISSANCE ARCHITECTURE**
7. **MEDICAL SUPPORT**
8. **CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL RADIological AND NUCLEAR DEFENCE**
9. **THIRD PARTY LOGISTIC SUPPORT**
10. **COUNTER-IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE (C-IED)**
11. **INCREASED AVAILABILITY OF HELICOPTERS**
12. **NETWORK ENABLED CAPABILITY**

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