
EDA: DELIVERING CAPABILITIES !

EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY

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October 2nd, a rainy day at Kleine Brogel Airforcebase in Belgium, we're about to find out what Green Blade, Pegasus and EDA stand for. During the press-briefing this day Mrs. Claude-France Arnould, Chief Executive (CE) of EDA explains. 'European Defence is in a critical time. EU defence departments are facing a perfect storm' and 'Declining government revenues, an increasingly unstable world, a shift in US focus and a domestic industry, struggling to retain its technical know-how as major programmes are cut or delayed'. Due to the economical situations the general scene in Europe makes that many countries cannot maintain their desired military strength. (for military or other civil purposes is not the issue). Many conflicts can be a threat to peace like Iran, Middle-east in general, Syria, millions of refugees all over the world, the international scene is in a downward spiral momentarily. Being prepared as it comes to cooperation is now the time to work that out, not whenever and where-ever it might be too late for that because we did shut our eyes. EDA is a strong answer to the increasing dangers that are a threat to the safety and security of Europe, a cornerstone to international operability where the helicopter plays the keyrole for international actions when and where needed.

A LOOK IN THE KITCHEN

The political will to cooperate among member states has become a necessity and has never been stronger than today, however to realize this is a complex matter on various levels such as economical, military, financial, logistical and many more. The safety levels we seemed to have some decades ago are subject to changes. If the EU governments are to be protected from future threats, they will have to rely on the EDA agency, because defence and security budgets are under pressure. This cooperation - so Mrs. Arnould explains - is a considerable challenge. Governments look for savings where at a crucial moment degrading strategic industrial and technical abilities is a great risk for continuity and effectiveness in single states as well internationally seen. 'We have to take decisions now, or face dire consequences in the coming decades'.

Crucial capabilities are missing in the seperate EU states, these gaps need to be filled in. The time has come to work together now in an efficient way. Shared training capabilities, air-to-air refuelling, sharing datalink information, all have to be expanded and controlled from a central point. There is progress, but it needs to be better, faster and more efficient. EDA can provide a 'plug-and-play service, a 'defence a la carte' system. An independent cooperation project as example is shown by the three C-17 Globemasters based at Papa AFB Hungary, where countries can register collective for use with own national crew or even with international colleagues. 'Lease your Globemaster' as it were and that will be the future. EDA is the present organisation for the future for training, coordinating and plug and play solutions regarding material

and personell. 'EDA supports the member states, which is seen as the absolute mantra, the way of thinking that liberates and protects'.

GREEN BLADE EXERCISE

Green Blade is an example of the results of EDA's efforts. One of the participating countries is Italy. Colonel Massimo Guasoni is for the time being appointed as Capabilities Manager Manoeuvre and deployed to EDA Europe in Brussels. He underlines the need for cooperation and explains that already some years in fact all aspects are available within the memberstates, but not effectively centralized to one point such as helicopter availability. Procedures, equipment, medical sets, it's all included now in one organization, and the gap in common training is now trained and shown what you can put together from the different states and their availabilities. Analyze and identify areas for improvement will always lead to closer cooperation and more precision. Col. Guasoni already sees the results after four major exercises up til now, Green Blade implicates the combination of special operation forces combined to maximum helicopter availability and operationality bij the Capability Development Program-Team (CDP-T). The four EDA divisions act under supervision of Chief Executive Mrs. Arnould,

these four divisions are 1-Armament, 2-Research and Techniques (R&T), 3-Industry and Market (I&M) and 4- Capabilities and Manoeuvres (C&M, Col. Guasoni). The latter is involved to the Capability Planning Process. Capability shortfalls in one area must be solved by delivering these from another area, individual units have to interact as one organisation. This will lead to a strong, capable, rapidly deployable force also interacting with the special operation forces who have their own specific tasks and techniques. During Green Blade the helicopter arsenal was delivered by Italy (A-129 Mangusta attack helicopters and Chinook transport helicopter) Germany (UH-1D transport helicopters) and Belgium (A-109 Medevac and armed support helicopters and C-130 Hercules). Special forces were present from Spain, Italy, Belgium and Luxembourg. This operation had codename 'Pegasus'.

POOLING AND SHARING

Guasoni explains that the two exercises Green Blade (helicopter logistics) and Pegasus (special ops) flow seamlessly integrated together in CJF (Combined Joint Forces) where people make the difference. This process will expand, more member states are welcome to join recognizing the formidable target within an effective organization. Pooling and sharing equipment and manpower in all aspects also such as providing medical aid, medevac, fire fighting and airlift are some examples. Also there will be more transparency on a central point about stock of material, ammunition on location and quantity. What to think of the lines between EDA and ESA, since communication by satellites takes an increasing role in modern warfare and military support ? Endless possibilities ! EDA also plays a vital role in working with European Commission on technology issues in flying unmanned aircraft systems (UAS. Mr. Jerome Garcia (technology manager) states: 'Critical issues include data-links, communications and training'. New members who are aware of these needs can integrate as they wish. Mutual promoting and tuning of structures in an international landscape with true life equipment, skills, employment, solidarity in

sharing cost and efficiently. Pooling and sharing in an international network , a central coordination of the airfields of friendly neighbours as mentioned 'a la carte' defence which idea was born in Gent Belgium about two years ago. Green Blade gave us a demonstration of 'train and fight together'. Looking at former European defence project learns that these projects often got stuck in years of bilateral negotiations which hurt everyone and cost a lot of unnecessary money. One independent organization that can deliver concrete results quickly makes the difference. For now the goal is to support the member states to maximize their sovereign capabilities and deliver value for money for their taxpayers. New projects are coming up, such as the identified need for the mentioned air-to-air refuelling. For this critical capability shortfall The Netherlands, Germany and France are willing to take a lead in this within EDA. Once completed such a project, it reduces friction and it makes cooperation at effective completion of these vital tasks possible. Another example concerns the field hospitals project where Italy is now taking the lead. Sharing experiences amongst the member states also leads to more flexibility, knowledge, smarter tactics, for instance the lessons learned in Afghanistan. To work more efficient together, EDA devised a rapid and cost-effective cross-border training programme to effectively bridge this gap.

DUPLICATE FROM NATO ?

Mrs. Arnould and Col. Guasoni both emphasize that EDA is not a concurrent of NATO, member states cannot afford duplication. EDA can be a very effective tool to NATO. Quoting Mrs. Arnould: 'The capabilities we develop are national capabilities. Member states deploy them whenever and where-ever they wish and they can contribute them to their own missions, to NATO missions and to EU missions as their politicians dictate'. Europe will be a security provider, not a security risk. No one can foresee what we will have to face coming decades, therefore EDA has already plotted a direction to the year 2015 where all member states agree on the need of mentioned elements. Once we recognize such (urgent) needs, we have the QRA (Quick Reaction Force) available. Possibly in times of disaster EDA can act faster and smarter than NATO and be a valuable partner in crisis times. EDA can also react quickly if there is a need to go in a specific instantly needed direction in Europe. Concurrent of NATO ? No definitely not. More a pragmatic approach to deliver more capabilities at lower cost. 'Pooling and sharing is an art, not a science' as stated by Jon Mullin, Capabilities Director at EDA.

PEGASUS

Pegasus ran from sept. 18th to oct. 5th. 15 helicopters and around 550 personnel participated in Green Blade, the latter as fifth exercise of this character. Participants in Green Blade (helicopter) were Belgium, Italy, and Germany, for Pegasus (special forces) Belgium, Italy and Spain. Canada, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic sent some observers. Additionally there were about 200 people as role-players, real life and medical support, safety and security as well as Forward Arming and Refuelling Point personnel (FARP). Former exercises were held in France, Italy, Portugal and Spain. Pegasus is a biennial exercise in Belgium for the special forces where several skills are trained, practiced and improved. Combining Pegasus with Green Blade also

gives - next to the already mentioned advantages - a firm reduce of cost. The start was dedicated to Combat Enhanced Training and Force Integration training (CET-FIT) getting acquainted to colleagues, area and equipment. Same goes for the flying crews, who have to get familiar with the local landscape, rules, and exercise specific operation procedures. Special forces had several trainings such as balloon jumping (Italian and Spanish forces) , fast-roping out of the helicopters, free-fall jumps from high altitude (12.000 feet) by Belgian C-130 Hercules, also by night with use of NVG (night vision goggles). The special forces had to get acquainted with doing their jobs out of several types of helicopters. Fast-roping is a technique to extract troopers on places where a helicopter cannot land. The process of mission progress is even simple as effective: Make the plan, Brief all involved, execute the plan, debrief and inventory of the lessons learned, the best way to practice ! The network of used locations included 15 locations, most of them in the North of Belgium. The complete program since 2009 involved 123 helicopters and 227 crews.

LIVE EXAMPLE DEMONSTRATED

On a reduced location an improvised attack took place to an identified High Value target (HVT), a super-terrorist who was discovered hiding on this spot. He was to be captured alive and the location cleaned of terrorists. By a United Nations security council resolution an international security force 'HideFor' is sent, which has been mandated to intervene and stop all violence against the civilian population. The radical revolutionary group is very active in the area, terrorising population and kidnapping are their main activities. The leader, 'Mr. Boris Burtoch' is using the house in front of us as a hideout. The special operations component command has ordered immediate action to capture Mr. Burtoch alive. A Belgian special operations task unit supported by combined rotary special operations have planned this action. The target is being observed by a special reconnaissance team since two days in order to identify his pattern of life. Their observations have shown that the HVT is present, and the special operations commander decided to execute the capture plan immediately. Just before dawn the special forces support group has been infiltrated by parachute in order to secure the parameter of the target.

Minutes before the start of the mission this sniper group has taken position in order to control the environment and to be ready for possible engagement. All members of the terror group including the HVT are located in the house except two men near an armoured truck with machinegun where both men can be a threat to the entire operation. Two A-129 Mangusta attack helicopters seemed to come from nowhere and cleared and secured the area, the events now follow each other in quick succession. The machinegun on the truck is blasted away and immediately afterwards special forces are lowered by fast-roping out of the Italian Chinook of 1st Regiment 'Antares', on the other side of the location LTG UH-1D German helicopters approach, special forces rope down fast and take possession and control of the location and house. The HVT, is arrested and instantly taken away for interrogation by an armed A-109 Hirundo of the Belgian AF. One commando was shot and had to be transported immediately which was taken care of by another (Medevac) A-109 and after the action had taken place in minutes a heavy CH-47 Italian Chinook landed on a very small strip between the trees and transported the special forces out

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of the action area. 'Plug and play a la carte' ! Just a small demonstrated example that in the EDA cooperation it is possible to overview these strategic needs to help develop strategic capabilities in the entire defence field which will have a strategic impact across European society. Being optimistic, it is now the right time for new opportunities and - as the Americans like to say: 'Never waste a crisis'!

Wim Das and Koos Heemskerk

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