

CFSP WATCH 2005 – United Kingdom – by Tim Oliver¹

1. *What are the priorities for your government in CFSP in 2005? What are the key issues for your country in 2005 (especially with regard to the negative referenda on the Constitutional Treaty in France and the Netherlands; after the recent EU enlargement and on behalf of the perspective of the upcoming accession round(s))?*

Britain will hold the EU Presidency in the latter half of 2005. The priorities of the presidency reflect the issues identified in the 'Cross-Presidency Multiannual Strategic Programme for 2004-06', published in December 2003, and the Luxembourg-UK work programme published in December 2004. The Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Tony Blair MP set out the UK's priorities in a speech he gave to the European Parliament on 23 June 2005. The priorities which relate to the EU's external policies include the following:

- Counter terrorism - Taking forward EU Counter Terrorism Action Plan including measures such as the European Evidence Warrant which will enable law enforcement agencies to quickly access important evidence from elsewhere in the EU.
- People trafficking and migration – Developing an Action Plan on people trafficking and working for greater EU-wide police co-operation. Managing migration into the EU through stronger links with the main source countries worldwide and strengthening the EU's borders.
- Enlargement – Taking forward existing commitments on enlargement including opening negotiations with Turkey on 3 October. Starting accession talks with Croatia as soon as the conditions are met and preparing for Bulgarian and Romanian entry in January 2007.
- Doha Development Agenda – For an outcome on Doha at the WTO Ministerial meeting in Hong Kong that paves the way for an agreement delivering greater global economic growth, with better access to markets for developing countries.
- Africa – Developing a long-term strategy for Africa, building on the EU's historic commitment to double ODA. Centred on governance, peace and security, access to basic services, growth and trade. Pushing this forward at the UN Millennium Review Summit, New York in September.
- Climate change – Representing the EU at the UN Climate Change negotiations in December. Developing a post-2012 strategy; international engagement, particularly with the growing economies of China and India; and addressing the impact of aviation on climate change.
- Peace, stability and reform in the Middle East – Promoting peace, stability and reform in the Middle East, Afghanistan and Africa by supporting the Middle East Peace Process, including Israeli disengagement; increasing Palestinian security capacity; delivering EU commitments to Iraq; reform through the EuroMed process; continuing E3/EU dialogue with Iran; and delivering EU commitments to the African Union mission in Darfur.
- Peace and stability in the Balkans - Entrenching peace and stability in the Balkans through the EU's, UK-led, military mission in Bosnia; building police capacity in Bosnia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; and pla

- Climate Change - Regarded as one of the top priorities for both the UK Presidency of the EU and for its presidency of the G8. Negotiations will continue on the REACH directive (proposed chemicals regulations) and the UK will start discussions on three strategies due from the Commission on waste, resource use and air pollution. The impact of aviation on climate change and the development of a post-2012 strategy for the EU will also be addressed by the UK. Positive relations and engagement with the Bush Administration are seen as crucial for success in this area.
- Development and Africa – This is regarded as a very high profile issue – and one particularly important personally to both the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown – developing a long term strategy for Africa features on the list of HMG's priorities for action. HMG's main aims are pursuing good governance, peace and security, access to basic services, growth and trade for Africa and ensuring EU policy continues to pursue the UN's Millennium Development Goals. HMG has indicated that it will work towards a positive outcome on the issue of trade from the Doha Development Agenda at the WTO meeting to be held in December.

With regard to the rejection of the constitutional treaty:

Following the no votes in France and the Netherlands HMG announced on 6 June that it would suspend the process by which the UK was preparing to run its own referenda on adopting the treaty. HMG had earlier acknowledged that the UK would ratify the treaty by way of a referendum. Putting ratification on hold was seen as a way of allowing for a period of reflection over what course of action should be taken by Europe. This was the position taken at the European Council on 16-17 June, where it was also decided that the issue would be looked at again in the first half of 2006 and thus after the UK Presidency.

HMG had welcomed the constitutional treaty, having argued publicly in the UK that it had secured many of its objectives during the negotiations to draft the treaty. HMG welcomed the chance the constitution might provide to advance reform of the EU, something the British have been very keen to see develop further in both economic and social terms and in terms of institutional effectiveness. The UK is no longer seeking the 'status quo' in Europe due to her demands for significant reforms in many areas; in this regard the current UK position differs from that of previous eras when the UK was seen as seeking no change and stability or movement backwards in many areas of EU policy. This is in contrast to the Netherlands or in particular France who the UK now views as resisting European led reforms of their economic and social models which in turn played a part in their rejection of the treaty. Indeed HMG tried to draw to the attention of a largely sceptical British public that one of the reasons identified for the French rejection of the treaty was due to how British the treaty appeared.

With regard to the areas of CFSP, HMG views the rejection of the treaty as a setback for creating more coherent external relations for the EU. The UK is a supporter of the position of an EU Foreign Minister, External Action Service and better cooperation in ESDP. Further details of this are set out below.

The UK has long been a keen advocate of European enlargement and continues to strongly support the membership of Bulgaria and Romania, provided they continue to meet the necessary conditions. The UK also supports the membership of Turkey, viewing this as an opportunity to provide the EU with a member who can bridge differences with the wider Middle East. Britain also supports all the membership applications of the countries in the Western Balkans, provided they meet the political criteria like any other EU applicants including full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. HMG supports the EU's approach of the Stabilisation and Association process based on aid, trade preferences, dialogue, technical advice and, ultimately, contractual obligations. There does not appear to be any possibility that the UK will hold a referendum specifically on enlargement issues as might occur in other states especially with regard to Turkish membership.

Terrorist Attacks in London, 7 July 2005.

The suicide bombings in London took place shortly after the start of the British EU Presidency, during the British chaired G8 meeting at Gleneagles in Scotland and the day after London had been awarded the 2012 Olympics. The attacks shared certain similarities with the attacks that took place in Madrid in that they were the work of extremist Islamic paramilitary organisations. Unlike in Madrid the police believe the perpetrators were all British or had been residing in Britain for a long time. In a video message recorded before the attacks, one of the bombers, Mohammad Sidique Khan, from Leeds, claimed the attacks were a response to the British participation in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Indeed, many have argued that British involvement in the Iraq War has made the UK more vulnerable to such attacks. The UK had already stated in its preparation for holding the EU presidency that it would seek progress on the Counter-terrorism action plan as set out after the attacks in Madrid. In particular, HMG aimed to agree essential measures on police and judicial co-operation, including proposals relating to the European Evidence Warrant and proposals on the retention of data on telecommunications traffic; lay the foundations of an EU strategy to combat radicalization and recruitment to terrorism; and deliver concrete assistance to partner countries outside the EU to help fight terrorism overseas. Given that many actions in the 2004 Action Plan will be completed by the end of 2005, HMG will also work to develop further the framework agreed in 2004, concluding the Presidency with a new agenda for what more EU Member States can do individually and together to fight terrorism.

Relations with Iran

The UK remains committed to working with the EU and in particular France, Germany and the High Representative in its relations with Iran in areas such as its nuclear programme, WMD proliferation, human rights and Iran's approach towards terrorism and the Middle East Peace Process. With regard to Iran's nuclear programme the UK hopes that Iran will remain committed to the November 2004 'Paris Agreement' to provide objective guarantees that Iran's nuclear programme is for exclusively peaceful purposes. The UK and EU hope that the promise of further negotiations on a draft EU/Iran Trade & Co-operation Agreement and a parallel political agreement will act as an incentive for Iran's cooperation. HMG will seek to take this forward, but within the wider context of Iran possibly being referred to the assistwill aations witj 47.21of fur Tw6vpromiseeed,j 3yaan3eration. HMG will Tj -342.7 342.75 5 ,r

Iraq and the Middle East.

HMG remains committed to its involvement in Iraq and HMG has stated that British forces look set to remain in Iraq for the foreseeable future.

HMG is keen to point out that the EU has made a clear commitment to assist Iraq with the transitional process, security and reconstruction, consistent with UN Security Council Resolution 1546. In light of this HMG has actively sought increased EU help. In June 2004 the European Council agreed a framework setting out a medium-term strategy for EU engagement with the Iraqi authorities. HMG views this strategy as bearing fruit for example with in November 2004 the EU Council presenting an EU package of assistance to then Iraqi Prime Minister Allawi. This was reaffirmed in February with the Union agreeing to such things as providing financial and technical support for the constitutional process; launching an integrated Rule of Law and Police Training Mission for Iraq with offices in Baghdad and Brussels; opening a European Commission Delegation office in Baghdad as soon as possible; a new aid package of €200m for 2005 in addition to EU humanitarian assistance which continues.

On 9 June 2005 the UK led an EU Troika delegation on a visit to Baghdad where they met the Iraqi Transitional Government (ITG). HMG and the Troika expressed their support for the Iraqi government and the transition process.

HMG intends that during the British EU Presidency, the EU will continue to increase its engagement with Iraq. In particular, HMG wishes to build up the current EU Rule of Law

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the constitution was somewhat lacking with the Labour government failing to lead a strong vocal campaign. Many wondered if in light of the difficulties in post-war Iraq – not to mention the unpopularity of the war from the start – the government would risk the strong chance of a rejection by allowing the British public a chance to voice their unhappiness with the Labour government. There was also some evidence that some of the debates that emerged in France – such as the infamous issue of the ‘Polish Plumber’ – might have arisen in the UK. European enlargement had already brought media headlines about gypsies flooding into the UK and something similar may well have arisen during a referendum debate; indeed it is only a matter of time before Britain – and in particular the press - engage in a ‘debate’ (for want of a better word) about Muslim immigrants gaining unrestricted access to the UK as a result of Turkish membership.

Many in government and the political arena consider the constitution to be dead. Of course, the constitution remains officially on the table and discussions continue about salvaging relevant pieces such as the parts about foreign policy coordination. However, any attempt to adopt the treaty ‘by the back door’ will be fiercely resisted by the Conservative party and eurosceptic press.

The speech given by Prime Minister Blair to the European Parliament at the start of the UK’s Presidency was well received. Yet for some the UK has failed to take advantage of the opportunity created by the rejections of constitution in order to provide an alternative; especially frustrating considering the UK holds the presidency of the EU and is in a strong position to push forward new ideas.

3. National Perceptions and Positions with regard to CFSP/ESDP Issues in 2005

Please describe key positions and perceptions in your country with regard to EU foreign policy, taking into account:

- *The perceived success and/or failure of CFSP/ESDP (e.g. taking into account current developments like the current ratification crisis of the Constitutional Treaty);*

The failure to adopt the constitutional treaty is not seen as creating a major crisis in the way the EU conducts its foreign policy with the situation remaining much as it did before. While there is disappointment at the dismissal of such ideas as the European Foreign Minister it is widely seen within government circles that such ideas, while not being implemented in full, will be implemented in some form.

The general public remains largely unaware of the existence of CFSP or ESDP, and indeed despite widespread unease with the situation in Iraq and relations with the Bush Administration there is no indication of warmer feelings towards ideas for increased European cooperation in foreign policy.

Despite this the UK remains committed to CFSP and ESDP, especially within a transatlantic context. The Prime Minister has repeatedly stressed the role of the UK as a ‘transatlantic bridge’ bringing together the USA and Europe, both of which he often seems equally committed. In an historical context it is worth noting that the current Prime Minister is one of the most pro-European prime ministers Britain has ever had (he even speaks French!).

The UK welcomes the cooperation and assistance CFSP/ESDP enables in such areas as Iran or Zimbabwe. The UK also sees CFSP as a means through which to advance policies which might not meet with the full agreement of Washington. An interesting case in this regard is the EU arms embargo with China. HMG seemed comfortable in following its European partners in reviewing the embargo despite the anger this provoked in the USA which in turn endangered British cooperation with the US in various defence related areas. The issue however did raise questions about how the EU – and its member states including the UK – think of Europe’s strategic priorities. There was some realisation that the EU lacks a coherent China policy. However, whether an EU policy will emerge is questionable as the each member states, including the UK, has distinct and varied interests in its relations with Beijing.

- *The role of the EU in crisis management e.g. in Congo, Georgia, Darfur;*

The UK remains committed to ensuring the EU develops better capabilities to deal with crisis situations; in doing so it looks back to the painful lessons learnt in the Balkans where ambitions were only achieved due to US support. The UK continues to accept and pursue a leading role in crisis management. HMG makes full use of Britain's experienced armed forces. 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. its activities in Sierra Leone.

There has been some 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 surrounding European defence issues in both the media and Parliament.

What discussion has taken place has highlighted how the strategy points to areas Europe still needs to do some hard thinking about, such as how to apply power and geo-political thinking. While the strategy is not as hard-power centred as its American counterpart (the US National Security Strategy) there is a perception that it skips over issues that the Europeans find difficult to address. For example, it is all very well to stress the importance of multilateralism, as the strategy does in great detail, but it then fails to explain how Europe should approach multilateral institutions when they fail.

For HMG there remains a key priority that the ESS or any further such documents do not undermine NATO. In part this unwillingness to challenge the centrality of NATO in itself explains why the Europeans – and indeed the UK – have failed to discuss other ideas for strategic thinking.

In early 2004 the UK set out its own quasi version of a security strategy document. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's 'UK International Priorities: A Strategy for the FCO' (available through the FCO website) set out the UK's – or some might argue the FCO'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.

- *European Neighbourhood Policy and its implications;*

As EU President the UK is currently seeking to ensure the effective monitoring of the recently adopted Action Plans for the first wave of European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) countries (Ukraine, Moldova, Israel, Palestinian Authority, Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan). The UK is keen to see that the plans –

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 2004 of a new Headline Goal 2010 was 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 presidency of the EU will further develop the rapid-response 'Battlegroups' initiative and agree a civilian capability improvement plan in November. The UK Presidency will launch a work programme on civil/military co-ordination intent on maximising the EU's potential to apply its especially wide range of security instruments coherently, including a framework to support comprehensive planning. HMG also looks forward to the EU improving its ability to contribute to disaster response, especially in light of the Asian tsunami last year; and take forward work on a concept for EU security sector reform missions.

4. The Constitutional Treaty and its future – National perceptions concerning a 'plan B'?

Describe (briefly) the position of your country on the following key issues and the possibility of their realisation without a Constitutional Treaty as a 'plan B', 'C' or 'D':

- *External Representation: What is the final position of your country on the European foreign minister and the President of the European Council? Will / should there be a post resembling that of the Foreign Minister based on the Nice Treaty (something like an enhanced High Representative)? How could this be realised?*

The UK was and remains in favour of the position of a European Foreign Minister, and the President of the European Council. The UK has been keen to ensure that the External Action Service exists 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 was seen by the UK as a means of ensuring increased control for the council. HMG was very keen to ensure that the role of the EU Foreign Minister was 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. Public opinion has from the start been uneasy with the title 'European Foreign Minister' or indeed the use of the word 'President' in relation to the Council. HMG remains keen to see these ideas realised in some format, but exactly how is not yet officially clear.

- *Basic structures of the European External Action Service have already been developed. Now that the Constitutional Treaty might not enter into force, is your government in favour of developing such a body in order to support the High Representative?*

HMG supports the creation of a European External Action Service. A concern does exist within some quarters that the External Action Service may present an additional layer of bureaucracy and will also seek to displace the national diplomatic services. In response HMG has made it clear that

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develop, however precise details of how this will occur without the constitutional treaty have yet to be made clear.

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.

- *Would your country support the creation of core groups inside or outside the EU in CFSP/ESDP if the Constitutional Treaty finally failed?*

See answer above regarding permanent structured cooperation.

5. *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.