

The African Standby Force

An update on progress

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In order to enable the Peace and Security Council [to] perform its responsibilities with respect to the deployment of peace support missions and interventions ... an African Standby Force shall be established. Such Force shall be composed of standby multidisciplinary contingents, with civilian and military components in their countries of origin and ready for rapid deployment at appropriate notice.

(PSC protocol, art 13.1)

Introduction

Much has happened since mid 2005 when the Institute published its first account of the progress that had been achieved with the establishment of the African Standby Force (ASF) (Cilliers & Malan 2005). This paper provides an update and commentary on subsequent progress. It does so without repeating in detail the background and basis of the ASF project – much of which is contained in the earlier paper.

The purpose of the ASF is to provide the African Union with capabilities to respond to conflicts through the deployment of peacekeeping forces and to undertake interventions pursuant to article 4(h) and (i) of the Constitutive Act in terms of which the AU was established. The ASF is intended for rapid deployment for a multiplicity of peace support operations that may include, inter alia, preventive deployment, peacekeeping, peace building, post conflict disarmament, demobilisation, re-integration and humanitarian assistance.

The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) has been privileged to participate in various aspects of the planning and thinking that has informed the ASF at continental level, and most prominently in Eastern Africa. The ISS also hosts the secretariat of the African Peace Support Trainers Association, which is engaged in various aspects of ASF training, as well as being a

partner on the Training for Peace project through which it has been able to provide civilian police with training for more than a decade. This paper accordingly draws extensively on various source documents developed at the level of the AU and regions. It is, however, not an official report. Some documents are still in draft form and/or incomplete and the analysis is necessarily limited to those documents made available to the ISS, and interviews that the Institute was able to conduct. This is therefore as much a commentary as an update on the remarkable progress that has been achieved in recent years on a massively ambitious scheme to enable Africa to play a greater role in and assume greater responsibility for continental conflict management.

The ASF concept

During May 2003 the African Chiefs of Defence and Security (ACDS) adopted a document entitled 'The policy framework document on the establishment of the African Standby Force (ASF) and of the Military Staff Committee (MSC)'. During a meeting a few days later, African ministers of foreign affairs recommended regular consultations to consolidate the proposals contained in the framework document. AU heads of state and government endorsed this recommendation during their summit meeting two months later and, after two key meetings of the ACDS in May 2003 and January 2004, adopted an amended framework document in July 2004.

The protocol establishing the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the associated ASF entered into force in December 2003, barely 17 months after being signed, demonstrating a serious political commitment to the conflict prevention and management initiatives of an invigorated AU.

The final concept for the ASF adopted by heads of state provided for five standby brigade level forces, one in each of Africa's five regions, supported by civilian police (CivPol) and other capacities. When

The protocol and ASF demonstrate a serious political commitment to the conflict prevention and management initiatives of an invigorated AU



Figure 1 ASF regions



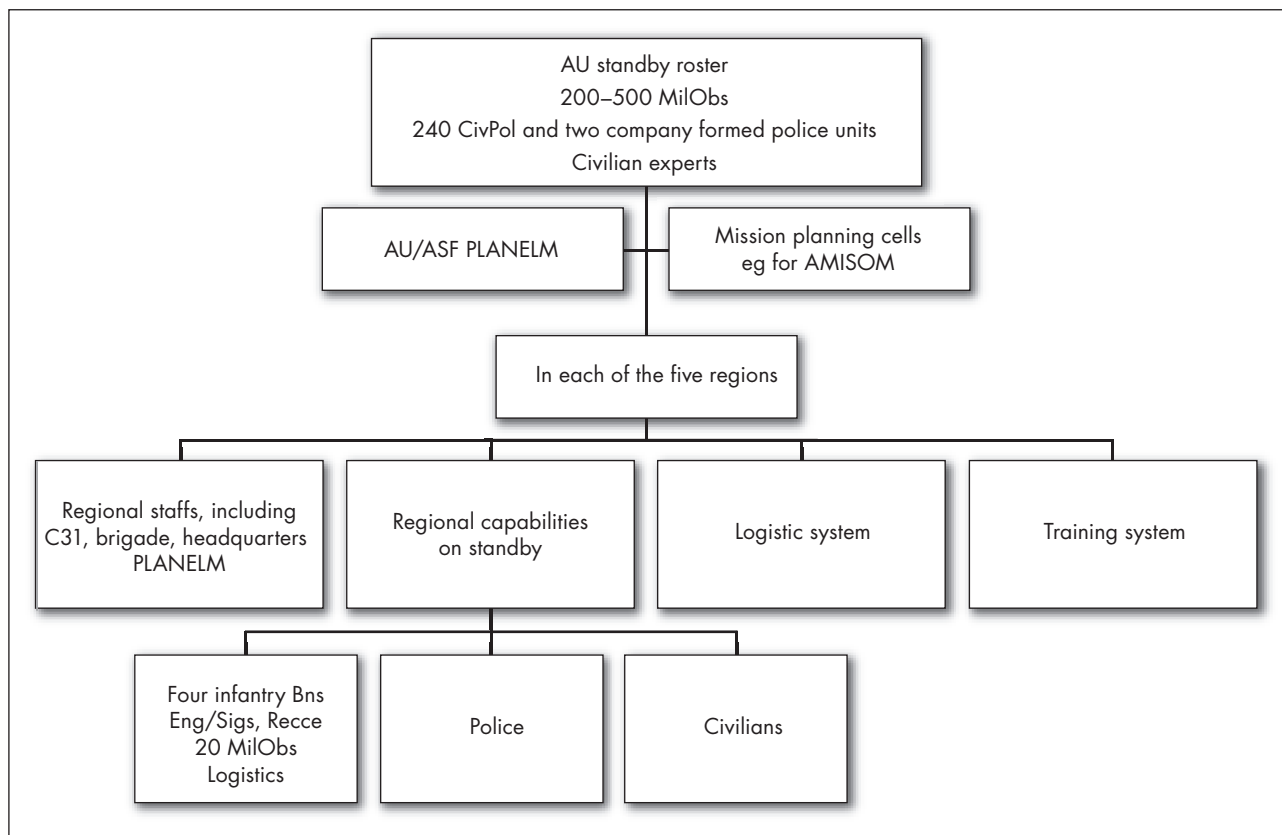
fully established, the ASF will consist of standby multidisciplinary contingents, with civilian and military components located in their countries of origin and ready for rapid deployment anywhere in Africa, and possibly even outside the continent.

However, effective command and control of the ASF require the installation of an appropriate Africa-wide, integrated and interoperable command, control, communication and information system (C3IS) infrastructure, that would link deployed units with mission headquarters, as well as the AU, planning elements (PLANELMs) and regions. Much of this was set out in the March 2005 document entitled 'Roadmap for the operationalisation of the African Standby Force', that was adopted at an AU experts meeting in Addis Ababa. The Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD) developed an internal follow-on roadmap document in November 2006,

although this document has no formal status. A recent development is the conceptualisation of an ASF rapid deployment capability, which will be discussed separately later on.

The PSC is the strategic level decision-making body that mandates ASF peace support missions within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations. Once mandated, missions are placed under the command and control of a Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission (SRCC). The chairperson also appoints a force commander, commissioner of police and head of the civilian components. Mandates are approved by the PSC and once deployed, ASF forces come under AU command and control. Thereafter the chairperson submits periodic progress reports to the PSC on the implementation of the mandates and relies on the commissioner for peace and security to perform these tasks. The primary role of the five

Figure 2 ASF approved order of battle



regional mechanisms is that of force generation and preparation (that is, pre-deployment activities) and the provision of planning, logistic and other support during ASF deployment.¹

The overarching structure of the ASF is set out in figure 2.

The military brigade is the largest and most resource-heavy component of each of the five regional standby forces, as the following illustrative composition of key resources within one of the regional brigades shows:²

The ASF structure – with its associated deployment timelines – is informed by six missions and scenarios:

- **Scenario 1:** AU/regional military advice to a political mission. Deployment required within 30 days of an AU mandate provided by the PSC.
- **Scenario 2:** AU/regional observer mission co-deployed with a UN mission. Deployment required within 30 days of an AU mandate.
- **Scenario 3:** Stand-alone AU/regional observer mission. Deployment required within 30 days of an AU mandate.

Table 1 Composition of key resources in a regional brigade

Unit	Personnel	Light vehicles	Armoured vehicles	Light recce	Helicopters
Brigade headquarters	85	15	As required		
4 x infantry battalions	3 000	280	As required		
Helicopter unit	80	10			4
Recce company	150		15	13	
HQ support company	65	16			
Military police unit	48	17			
Light signals unit	135	47			
Field engineer unit	505	65			
Logistic specialisation unit	190	40			
Level 2 hospital	35	10			
Total	4 293	500	15	13	4

- **Scenario 4:** AU/regional peacekeeping force for UN Chapter VI and preventive deployment missions (and peace building). Deployment required within 30 days of an AU mandate.
- **Scenario 5:** AU peacekeeping force for complex multidimensional peacekeeping missions, including those involving low-level spoilers. ASF completed deployment required within 90 days of an AU mandate, with the military component being able to deploy in 30 days.
- **Scenario 6:** AU intervention, for example in genocide situations where the international community does not act promptly. Here it is envisaged that the AU would have the capability to deploy a robust military force within 14 days.

The deployment timelines, already ambitious by any standard, are made particularly demanding by the multinational and standby character of the ASF. As a general rule, the more multinational a force, the more difficult it is to train and operate. Multinational forces also take longer to deploy if not pre-assembled at a staging area. Forces based on a single lead (or framework) nation, or forces largely consisting of one country's armed forces, are much easier to maintain at high readiness than multinational forces that require substantial periods of collaboration and joint exercises over several years, but do not enjoy the legitimacy and trust that multinational forces engender. For example, the Scenario 6 deployment of a military component within 14 days can only be performed by forces that are ready, assembled, fully equipped and exercised with transport available on immediate call and with logistic supplies pre-packed and ready for delivery by air. A force at such a state of readiness cannot take leave or be used for other duties, with the result that it cannot be maintained at this level for very long and have to be rotated at regular intervals. That being said, it is important to recognise that the intention is not to maintain a force at such a high level of readiness, but rather to use the early warning systems and mechanisms, such as the military staff committee of the PSC, to place troops on the appropriate level of readiness for emerging eventualities.

It is also quite likely that the levels of readiness between different regions and national contingents will differ from one another, implying that the AU will have to institute a continental system of validation to ensure that national/regional forces comply with the stated requirements. The outcome was that, during one of the AU training and evaluation workshops, experts finalised an evaluation and validation system that would confirm the operational readiness of the various components of the ASF at three levels:

- **Level 1:** Assessment of the state of readiness of the entire force
- **Level 2:** Validation of the training instructions and organisations with a focus on headquarters

at AU, regional brigade and unit level as well as coordination between the various components and humanitarian organisations/agencies

- **Level 3:** Application of lessons learnt during operations, and training at all levels³

The rapid deployment of ASF components requires both an ongoing planning function (provided at AU and regional levels by the proposed 15 person PLANELM at all levels), a mission planning cell at the level of the AU (such as the AU Mission to Somalia Planning and Management Cell and previously the Darfur Integrated Task Force) and an effective field level mission headquarters (provided by the region upon deployment). The ASF concept does not provide for an AU level field headquarters capability. In other words, the AU depends on the various regions for the provision and deployment of a headquarters at short notice.⁴

The AU had agreed that the ASF be established in two phases, although the timelines are moving to the right:

- **Phase one:** Up to 30 June 2006. The AU's key objective during this period was to establish a strategic level management capacity, while the regions would complement the AU by establishing forces up to brigade level strength for scenario 4. In phase one the priority was the military and police aspects of the ASF, since it was deemed that UN humanitarian, development and human rights elements, which do not require a UN Security Council mandate, would be able to deploy in tandem with ASF missions. In addition, scenarios 1 to 3 entail less complex structures, minimal management effort and fewer resources for deployment and sustainment compared to the other scenarios. The ASF has not been able to meet this milestone fully, although Western and Southern Africa have made substantial progress. Eastern Africa may have progressed substantially towards this requirement by the end of 2008.
- **Phase two:** By 30 June 2010 the AU must have developed full scenario 5 and 6 capacities. These missions entail enormous management effort, as well as considerable resources for the deployment and sustainment of missions. At the time of writing this paper, it is unlikely that the AU will be able to meet more than the nominal targets in the two years that remain, without a change in the capacities that member states are prepared to devote to the ASF and much greater leadership and action at AU level.

After having finalised the March 2005 roadmap, the AU hosted a meeting of experts in Addis Ababa during November/December 2005 to finalise the arrangements for a series of workshops to develop the appropriate concepts relating to

- Doctrine
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- Guidelines on C3IS
- Logistics
- Training and evaluation

Different regions agreed to lead on separate aspects, with the result that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) took on responsibility for the development of ASF doctrine, Eastern Africa for logistics, etc.⁵ In addition the AU recognised the importance of dedicated work on four additional areas not listed separately in the roadmap, namely legal aspects, the civilian component of the ASF, finances and medical issues.

A year later the Commission of the AU could report that it had successfully developed much of the baseline documentation consisting of doctrine, started work on the logistic concept, finalised guidelines for training and evaluation (consisting of a training policy and training standards), and considered C3IS and various ASF SOPs.⁶ This was brought about by means of some 16 workshops that had taken place in 2006 alone. During the next year there was further progress but at a

less hurried pace, consisting of the consolidation of the ASF tools and concept of operations, the identification of capabilities for deployment in the period up to 2010 and progress with regard to the inclusion of the civilian dimensions of peace operations, legal matters and medical planning. All of these await the approval by the African Chiefs of Defence and Security in a long-delayed fifth meeting, now scheduled for March 2008.

Schematically the level of progress, as presented to the commissioner of peace and security early in 2007, was as shown in figure 3.⁷

Some examples of the progress are the drafting of an ASF training policy⁸ which provides for continental, regional and national levels of training and the development and circulation of SOPs by the commission that, amongst others, support the standardisation of training doctrines, manuals and programmes. A number of regions have also designated centres of training excellence to conduct tactical, operational and strategic training. However, in accordance with the draft policy, the AU must develop an accreditation process for these centres, coordinate

Figure 3 Progress with the ASF at the end of 2006

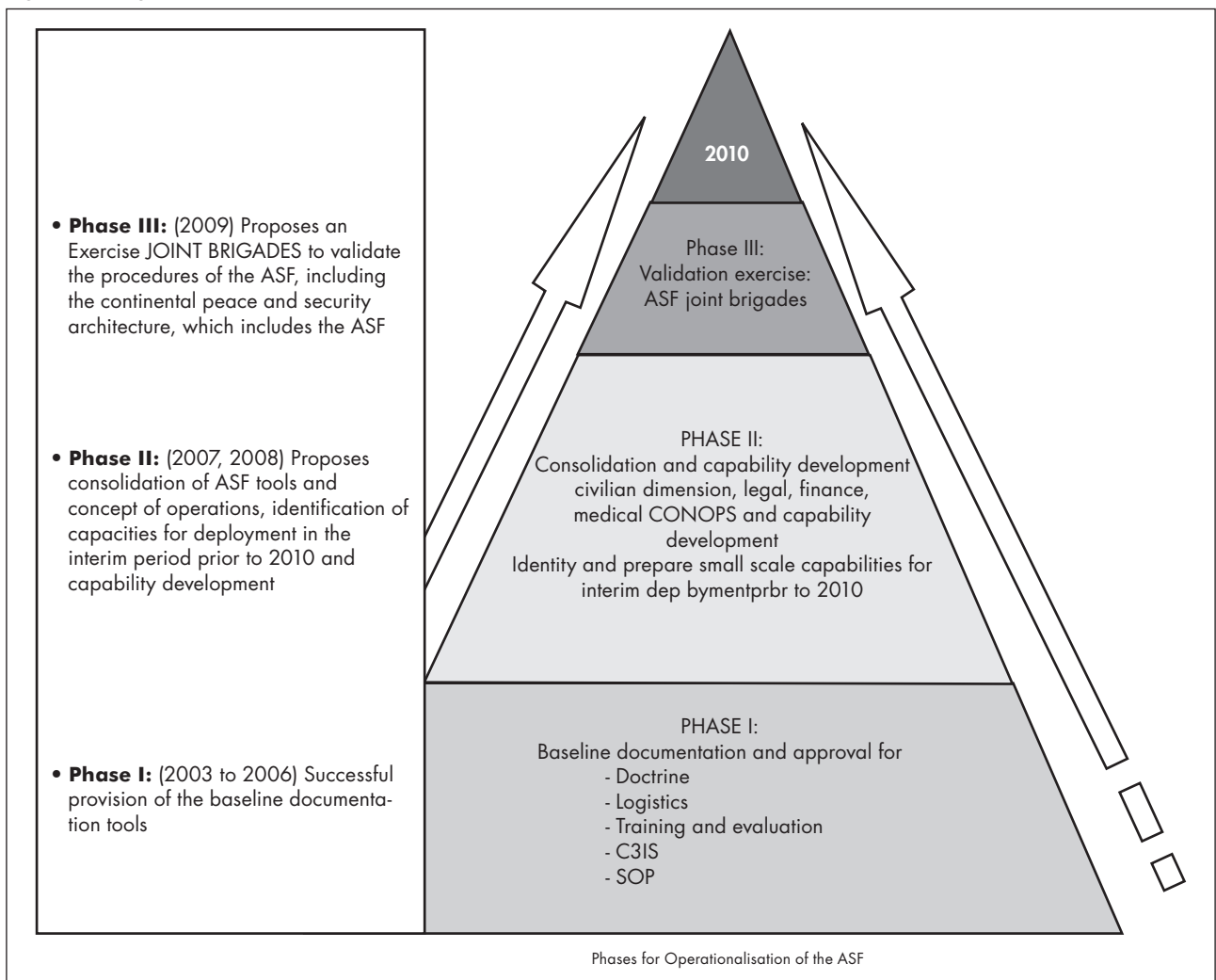
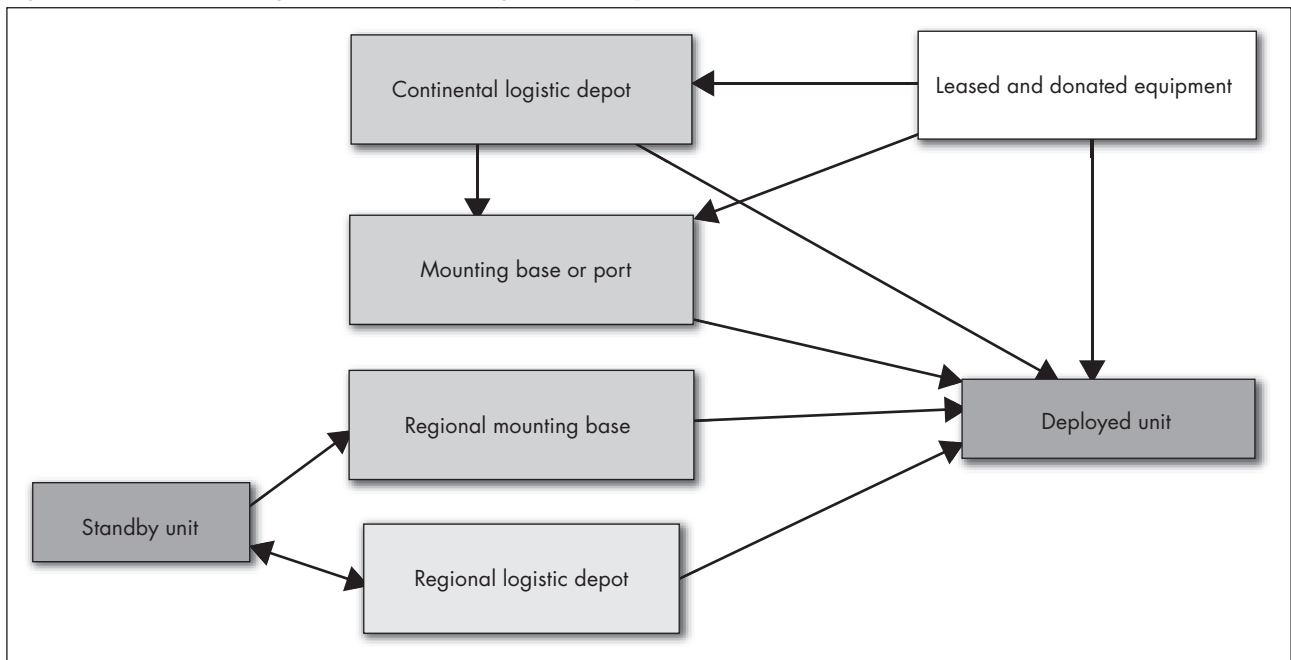


Figure 4 Schematic diagram to illustrate logistic concepts



training, establish an ASF database to which the centres are to contribute data of trained beneficiaries to enhance the AU's list of resource persons and ASF roster, and coordinate the establishment of training evaluation teams.⁹

In terms of the draft training policy the AU must define and fund a biennial training plan at continental and regional levels. The continental training plan provides for various workshops, an annual exercise for the AU PLANELM and one major exercise involving three regions in the lead-up to 2010. Apart from various workshops, regional training is expected to include a map exercise and two interregional deployment exercises.¹⁰ The AU is now planning to host a field exercise of the regional forces in 2009, to validate the procedures for the ASF, and a command post exercise early in 2010.¹¹

While Africa has seen good progress with regard to training, development of doctrine, SOPs, command and control concepts and the like, the issue of ASF logistics remains hugely problematic. The policy framework proposed a system of AU military logistic depots, consisting of the AU military logistic depot in Addis Ababa and regional logistic bases, aimed at rapid deployment and mission sustainability. Anticipating the need for technical, and not political, considerations to inform the potential location of substantial logistic assets in particular countries, the 2005 roadmap proposed that the AU PLANELM '... initiate and complete a study to present a costed continental logistic system for the ASF that outlines the appropriate concepts and plans for preparing, deploying and sustaining the ASF'.¹² The original idea was that the UN be invited to lead this study but the time delays and the decision to request one of the regions to assume responsibility for the

planning process have complicated the finalisation of the ASF logistic concept.

If the ASF were to be able to deploy within the timelines for the various conflict scenarios, it would require that mission-ready units and headquarters, with equipment which includes vehicles and communications, be held either at a centralised regional logistic base or be provided on an 'on-call' basis by international partners or private contractors under clear terms of commitment. To launch the ASF elements into mission areas, these pre-deployment arrangements would have to be backed by standing arrangements for strategic sea- and airlift.

At present the UN has contracted out most of its logistic requirements to commercial companies. For example, the Los Angeles based Pacific Architects & Engineers (now part of Lockheed Martin) that provided the logistics backbone for the AU Mission in The Sudan (AMIS) (and recently Dyncorp) provides 34 base camps in Darfur as well as vehicle maintenance and telecommunications equipment based on series of contracts, the most recent of which was valued at \$21 million (Cole 2007). Logistic arrangements for the ASF would be particularly onerous when one considers the complexity of funding arrangements for ASF deployment, reimbursement mechanisms, government-to-government arrangements and outsourcing requirements.¹³ A final ASF logistic plan will have to include equipment procurement and preparation, finalisation of a memorandum of understanding on reimbursement, and plans for mounting and strategic lift. Each regional PLANELM will therefore have to decide what equipment is to be held in depots and how to procure supplies from commercial sources at short notice. Each will furthermore have to develop

plans and prepare draft contracts for rapid procurement of equipment, conclude draft status of forces and status of mission agreements, draft memorandums of understanding covering partner support, and prepare budgets and conclude financial arrangements.

Figure 4 provides an illustrative schematic for mounting an ASF operation.¹⁴

To some the implication of the policy framework requirement was straightforward – a continental depot (probably in Addis Ababa) and a regional logistic base in each of the five regions. Others argue in favour of a more flexible arrangement consisting of a single continental depot at the most appropriate location (generally accepted to be either at a deep-sea port and/or co-located at an international air base) with the ability to forward deploy stores to regional depots or mounting bases, depending on the operational plan. The UN has also offered the use of its Brindisi logistic facilities in Italy – either as a continental logistic base or for use by the North Africa Standby Force.

However, many ASF countries do not provide fully equipped units and the question is how much additional capacity should be provided for at the logistic depots and who should take ownership of the various logistic bases – international partners, the region, the AU or the UN? Or should it be outsourced? In practice troops cannot be provided with equipment from a depot only upon deployment, as they need to train with the same equipment that they will use operationally.¹⁵

In summary it can be said that the AU has made substantial progress in meeting its 2005 roadmap goals for phase one, although the different regions progressed at uneven rates (as will become clear from the discussion below), which affected the extent of progress at the continental level. Disappointing as this may be when measured against the ambitious goals of the original 2005 roadmap, this period at least served to bring about greater clarity about the roles of the UN and the AU.

Mandates: The UN and the AU

In a reversal of thinking at international level, it has now become accepted that the AU can and should deploy in advance of the UN – demonstrated both during AMIS in Darfur and subsequently with the AU Mission to Somalia. Originally, the purpose of the ASF was largely ‘never to allow another genocide like Rwanda’, which was the rationale behind the need for quick response capabilities and the capability to mount a mission to cover the early days while the ponderous UN peacekeeping system lumbered into operational

mode. Today it is accepted that the AU will deploy first, opening up the possibility for a UN follow-on multi-dimensional peace support operation. In this scenario ASF forces will therefore be deployed into a situation as part of the peacemaking process at an earlier stage than UN forces would be allowed to engage. They would thereby help to create the conditions on the ground that could lead to a comprehensive peace agreement and the deployment of UN forces. This was indeed the situation in Burundi with the AU and UN, and with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the UN in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d’Ivoire. The exit strategy for ASF operations is therefore a transition to the UN – which could include the redesignation of substantial ASF resources as UN contingents.

There are two practical challenges with this idea, however. The first concerns the relationship between UN and ASF operations, which could lead to a severe and early depletion of ASF forces available for deployment elsewhere. This could be alleviated by using forces from countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and

India, which have emerged as major peacekeeping force providers in Africa. While the potential full standby strength of the ASF would come to 25 000 troops and up to 980 military observers, the UN had 70 285 troops, 1 528 military observers and 11 041 police deployed on peacekeeping missions by 31 January this year, of which the six key missions in Africa account for 48 043 troops, 1 941 military observers and 6 520 police.¹⁶ As these numbers indicate, the redesignation of ASF forces as part of UN operations would quickly deplete the available ASF capacity. This could be exacerbated by the fact that although Africa provides substantial numbers of

troops to UN missions, African troop contributors appear to choose between deployment on UN missions and a commitment to the ASF. Given the disparities in resources available to the two types of missions, the ASF does not generally receive the same level of support as that of UN missions. Clearly, the relationship between the UN and ASF operations is something that will require attention in the future.

The second is the challenge of handing over control to the UN with its more restrictive entry criteria than those of the AU. In the aftermath of a slew of challenging missions, the 2000 Brahimi report on peacekeeping emphasised the importance of ‘there being a peace to keep’ and set as a benchmark that the UN should not deploy forces unless a binding and overarching peace agreement was in place. The result is a marked UN reluctance to assume a peacekeeping responsibility before a comprehensive agreement is in place. In addition, once the UN has accepted such a

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role there are often extremely long delays in effecting the transition from an AU to a UN mission, as occurred in Burundi and Darfur.¹⁷

Despite the apparent differences between ASF and UN peacekeeping, a close reading of the PSC protocol makes it clear that the ASF was established, and should develop and deploy, in close collaboration with the UN. Indeed, the prologue to the protocol reiterates the primary responsibility of the UN security council for the maintenance of international peace and security. It subsequently mandates the chairperson of the AU and the PSC to promote and develop a strong partnership for peace and security between the AU, the UN and its agencies. Although dedicated to Africa, the ASF is part and parcel of a global system. This close relationship between the AU and the UN is evident in the references to the use of international standards, codes and treaties and general cooperation where appropriate, but also in the roles envisaged for the UN in assessments of African peace support capacities and coordination of external initiatives in support of the ASF.¹⁸ Hence article 17 on the relationship with the UN and other international organisations makes it obligatory for the PSC to cooperate and work closely with the UN security council as well as with other relevant UN agencies. The protocol makes specific reference to chapter VIII of the Charter of the UN and the provision of financial, logistical and military support from the UN. This is also a position evident in the 2003 policy framework document that underpins the ASF.

Article 7 of the PSC protocol determines that the PSC, in conjunction with chairperson of the commission, 'shall authorize the mounting and deployment of peace support operations; lay down general guidelines for the conduct of such missions including the mandate thereof, and undertake periodic reviews of these guidelines; recommend to the Assembly, ... intervention, on behalf of the Union, in a Member State in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity...; [and] approve the modalities for intervention by the Union in a Member State'. Since the PSC protocol has been ratified by all AU members, it follows that only the AU/PSC can authorise the use of the ASF and that the PSC, acting in conjunction with the chairperson of the AU, is the sole authority for mandating and terminating AU peace missions and operations. The assembly of heads of state and government do so in the case of interventions in a member state.

As a rule the AU has sought the support of the UN security council for all missions, in part as this is a requirement for access to the financial resources from the African Peace Facility provided by the European Union. Or put differently, should Eastern Africa decide

to undertake a peace mission in Somalia without an AU mandate, this could not legally be undertaken as part of the ASF nor would a donor such as the EU readily agree to fund it except if mandated by the UN security council. This does not, of course, preclude regions from undertaking peacekeeping missions under their own auspices, provided they comply with the relevant provisions in the Charter of the UN (SADC 2007, art 7.1).

Command and control

In recent years the term 'integrated mission' is used increasingly to describe the set of management principles and practices that support unity of effort in post-conflict settings that feature multiple international actors. It is a term that has also become widely accepted within the ASF and has been incorporated in doctrine, SOPs and related policy documents. More an approach than a template, an integrated mission approach implies that the military effort is fully integrated with other components and that all keep in mind the long-term strategic objective of the mission.

The term 'integrated mission' is used increasingly in post-conflict settings that feature multiple international actors

As is clear from its use in ASF documents, integration does not necessarily require or imply unity of command, an approach that would seek to make all international assets within a mission work towards a single plan, answerable to a single source of authority. Rather, an integrated mission is one in which divergent political, humanitarian, developmental and security components all have common strategic objectives. Such an approach implies a shared understanding of the priorities and types of programme interventions to be undertaken at each stage of a peace process by numerous actors, some of whom may not be part of the AU's direct

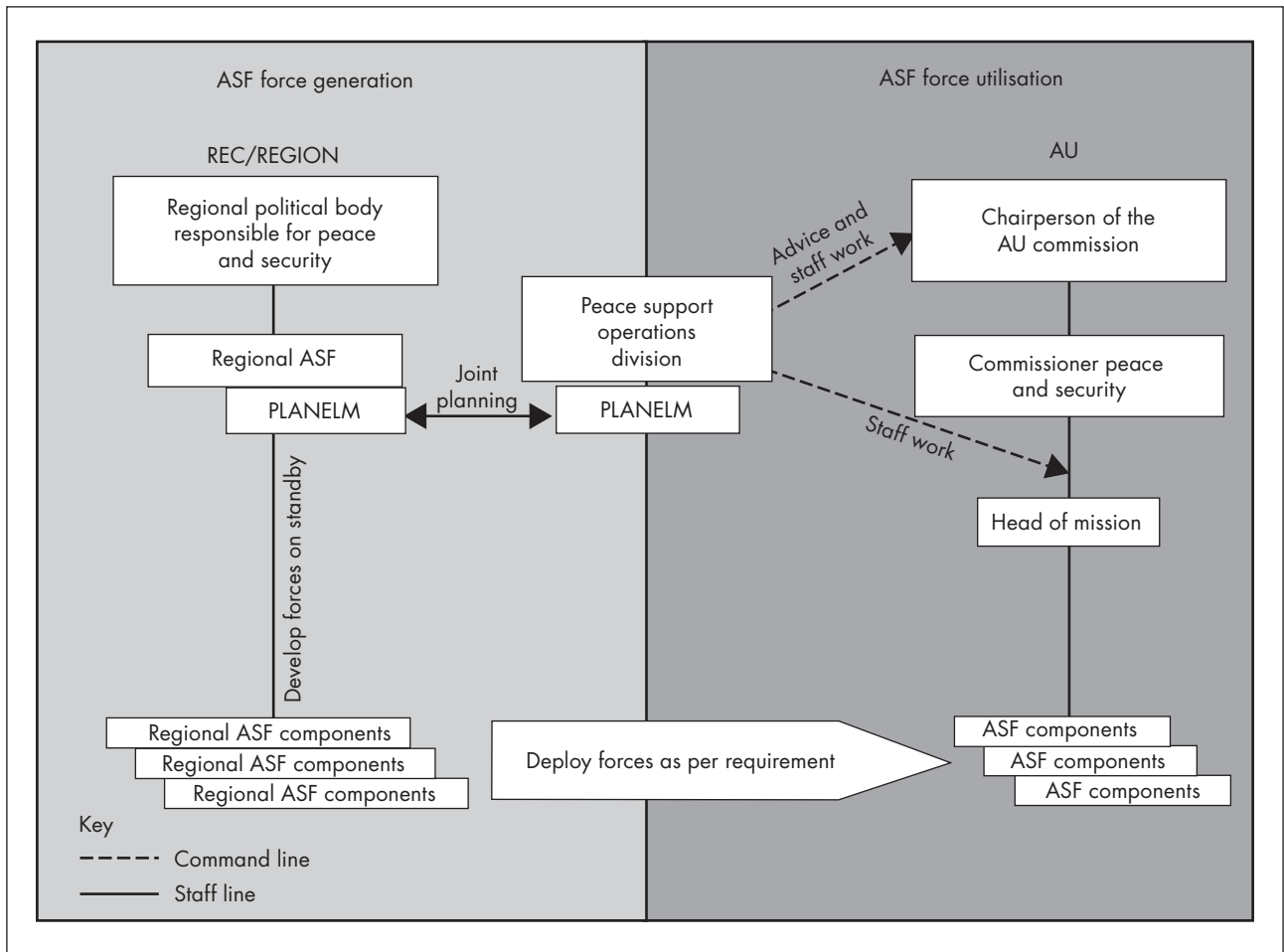
planning process.

Military staffs often assume an important role in this process. Normally the military 'campaign plan' is the most formal and stylised of the various functional planning components that inform and constitute the integrated plan, and may influence the latter to a large extent. Often the military will be the first formal representation of a peace mission in a country in crisis and in the early stages of planning the military may have to assume a leading role, interfacing directly with UN agencies and non-government organisations that are already on the ground. Until such time as a Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission (SRCC) is appointed, the commander of the military component may also have to act as the head of mission and in this role commence with a draft mission plan.

Having learnt from UN practice, a PSC mandate will be preceded by a technical assessment to the mission



Figure 5 The relationship between force generation and force utilisation



Source: *The African Standby Force command and control system, par 15.*

area and the development of a concept of operations. Once the mandate has been approved, the doctrine calls for the chairperson of the AU commission to issue a directive and finalise the rules of engagement. This directive provides the basis on which the AU Peace and Security Operations Division (PSOD) planning staffs develop an integrated mission plan.¹⁹ Depending on when mission personnel are appointed, the PSOD is likely to retain the lead in planning until such time as there is a viable mission headquarters in place after which the head of mission or SRCC will gradually assume the lead in the further development and eventual implementation of the plan.

In the event that the majority of capacities that are deployed come from one region alone, the PSOD will typically look towards that region and not individual troop contributing countries to sustain the forces in the field, and to that end negotiate a memorandum of understanding with the region. The region will then be expected to sustain its forces through various individual agreements with the different troop contributing countries. In this manner the AU will rely upon the regions for force provision.

Alternatively, if an ASF mission consists of troops from all over the continent, the PSOD and the mission staffs

may have to negotiate agreements with individual countries, rather than with one or more regions. This was the situation with AMIS troop deployments, where troops from different regions were deployed in adjacent sectors in Darfur.

In all instances the regions or individual troop contributing countries will be expected to maintain their forces in the mission area indefinitely, for which they will ideally be compensated after the initial 90-day period.

This command and control status is reflected in figure 5 above, taken from the draft ASF command and control doctrine.

Rapid deployment concept

The ASF concept calls for the ability to intervene within 14 days from the provision of a mandate by the PSC in the case of genocide, for urgent assistance to a peacekeeping force, and as an early intervention presence in the case of imminent conflict.²⁰ This is set out as follows in the 2003 policy framework: 'In an emergency situation, the OAU [now AU] should undertake preliminary preventive action while preparing for more comprehensive action which may include

the UN involvement. The emphasis here is for speed of action and deployment. As a principle, the OAU should take the first initiative in approaching the UN to deploy a peace operation in response to an emergency in the continent. If the UN is unresponsive, the OAU must take preliminary action whilst continuing its efforts to elicit a positive response from the world body.²¹ In considering these requirements it is important to recognise that a number of preparations will precede a mandate, including a fact-finding mission, development of a concept of operations and various warning orders to troops on standby to improve levels of readiness.

Purpose of a Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC)

The early intervention during a crisis to stop violent conflict and/or atrocities and to stabilise the situation, or to render emergency assistance in cases of natural or human disasters

Tasks

- Rapid deployment under scenario 6
- Rapid deployment to start up a scenario 4 or 5 mission
- Rapid intervention to support stabilisation of a situation
- Rapid deployment in support of an existing mission
- Rapid support to provide humanitarian relief

Roles

- Secure point of entry
- Separate belligerents
- Guard key installations
- Active and, if necessary, aggressive patrolling
- Provide protection to civilians
- Assist with the return to rule of law
- Assist with humanitarian relief

Source: Presentation, Rapid deployment capability, 29 November 2007

The results of a first meeting of experts on a Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC) in July 2007 in Addis ended inconclusively. The workshop did quantify the RDC requirement as the ability to deploy around 2 500 or more troops in two phases (see tables 2 and 3). The requirements are that during the first phase 1 000 personnel (including mostly infantry, and police and civilians) must be ready to deploy within 14 days and a follow-on force (second phase) of 1 500 or more must be ready within the next 14 days.²² This would mean that the AU would, within 30 days, have half a brigade size force on the ground. Since the force has

to be logistically self-sustainable for at least a month, it would have to deploy fully equipped. During a third phase, the 'normal' ASF deployment would take place and the RDC would either be integrated into the force or rotate back to its base(s).

During the July 2007 meeting no agreement could be reached on the nature, location and command/control relationship of the RDC. Key officials within the AU argued in favour of a standing high-readiness capability, pre-assembled at a permanent base and ready for deployment to stabilise a situation under the mandate of the PSC. This would constitute an early entry force that would hand over to the follow-on ASF forces provided by regions, after which the RDC could regroup and return to its base, ready for a next task. In terms of this approach the RDC would serve as a force on call to the chairperson of the AU commission.

The experts generally argued that the views of the AU were contrary to the regional and decentralised character of the ASF concept. Their view was that the RDC should be a standby capacity under regional command and control during peacetime, either as part of or in addition to the regional ASF capacities. RDC capabilities would therefore only come under the command and control of the AU upon deployment and the chairperson of the AU would have to negotiate their release for deployment with the region and possibly even with the individual troop contributing countries. An alternative to this proposal could be that the AU identifies potential lead nations for scenario 6 operations.

The point of view of the international partners was that a centralised standing RDC would be very expensive and they balked at the associated cost implications of around US \$300 million per annum.

At this stage the most likely outcome appears to be that each regional standby force will develop its own high readiness combat group, either as part of or in addition to the regional standby force, and possibly structured around a lead nation concept. The AU will then develop a continental roster whereby the ASF rapid response capability will be shared between the five regions.

Prior to the developments at the level of the AU, the West African standby force (ESF) and SADC

Figure 6 RDC deployment concept

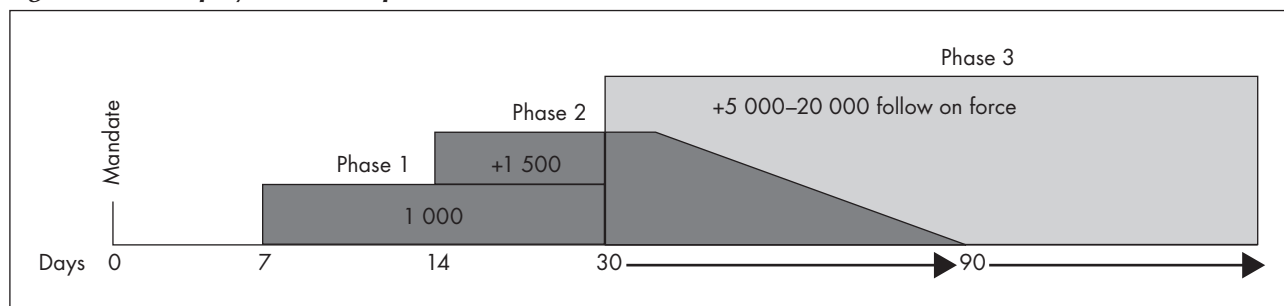


Table 2 RDC illustrative deployment, phase 1

Unit	Personnel	Light vehicles	Armoured vehicles	Helicopters
HQ and support	67	16		
Reconnaissance	22	2	6	
Light infantry battalion	700	49		
Mechanised infantry company	120	8	15	
Air support	20	6		8
Engineers	30	6		
Logistics, medical and military police	66	20		
Police and civilians	32	12		
Total	1 057	119	21	8

standby force had both advanced substantially in their preparations for such a capacity through the ESF task force (with a Nigerian and a composite/Senegal battle group) and the SADC early entry rapid reaction force. In neither region does the RDC apparently form part of the main brigade, but is it rather an addition which provides an added deployable capacity.²³ In the case of Eastern Africa, the United Kingdom proposed that Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya each consider a single nation standby high readiness battle group and has subsequently committed £1 million to establish a Kenyan battle group command structure with an enhanced headquarters in 2008 (Ward 2008).

While the separation between the location of the standing brigade element in Ethiopia and the PLANELM in Kenya may complicate or delay the deployment of an Eastern Africa standby force headquarters, this could be overcome if the region agrees on the deployment of a lead nation battle group as the RDC. In Southern Africa current thinking appears to be that the core RDC will be provided on a rotational basis by the more capable countries, such as South Africa, Angola and Zimbabwe, but that it would still have a multinational character.

One could speculate that Gabon and Egypt or Algeria could serve as lead nations for high readiness battle groups for Central and North Africa.

The RDC concept is ambitious given the requirement that units come fully equipped and that regions supply some additional operational requirements, while the AU coordinates strategic support such as airlift as well as logistics after the initial period of self-sufficiency. In this approach the AU could trigger the deployment of the RDC to a mounting base as a prelude to possible deployment pending a final mandate from the PSC or place them on shorter deployment notice within the respective countries. Whatever the choice, the operationalisation of the RDC would require a strict regime of training and evaluation in preparation for a period on standby as well as various protocols and agreements that would govern deployment.

By early 2008 the concept still awaits both clarity and finalisation at the level of the regions, the AU and African Chiefs of Defence and Security.

Funding and funders

The earlier ISS paper (see Cilliers & Malan 2005) listed seven options for external support to African peacekeeping. These ranged from the unlikely scenario of AU missions funded by means of assessed UN contributions to 'burden sharing' in which specific countries provide dedicated support to African partners, and included a range of intermediate options.

Table 3 RDC illustrative deployment, phase 2

Unit	Personnel	Light vehicles	Armoured vehicles	Helicopters
HQ and support				
Reconnaissance	22	2	6	
Light infantry battalion	700	49		
Mechanised infantry battalion	570	31	45	
Air support	15			2
Engineers	30	6		
Logistics	60	15		
Police and civilians	46	10		
Total	1 443	113	51	2

The AU has come around to the view that relying on external partners alone is not a feasible option. Accordingly, the commission now emphasises the need for greater efficiency of programme budgeting, effective allocation of current externally generated resources and mobilisation of additional resources from within Africa.²⁴ What is unclear is the extent to which African troop contributors share that view, since they, and not the commission of the AU, are the ones who would have to cough up the money.²⁵

Thus far the AU has not seen fit to implement the provisions of article 21 of the PSC protocol, which provides that when required, and following a decision by the relevant policy organs of the Union, the cost of ASF missions can be allocated to member states on the basis of their contributions to the regular budget of the Union. Following the adoption of a new scale of assessment during the AU summit in Sirté, Libya, in 2005, South Africa, Algeria, Nigeria, Egypt and Libya each contribute 15 per cent of the total budget of the AU while the other 48 member states contribute the remaining 25 per cent.²⁶

In 2003 the EU established the Africa Peace Facility, which had provided the AU with almost €300 million for peacekeeping and related capacity building by 2006.²⁷ The instrument became operational with the first Africa Peace Facility grant for the AMIS I operation in July 2004.

Those funds made a significant contribution to the African peacekeeping efforts in Burundi, Darfur, the Central African Republic and the Comoros. By March 2007 EU member states had contributed €400 million for Darfur, the USA \$350 million and various international partners such as the UK and Canada significant additional amounts through various bilateral arrangements. In fact, without the Africa Peace Facility it is unlikely that the AU would have been able to undertake any of these missions. Since the implementation of the Africa Peace Facility, the relationship between the AU and EU has developed quite strongly, resulting in the EU strategy for Africa and recently the extension of the joint EU-Africa strategy in December 2007. The EU is currently considering topping up the fund with an additional €300 million for 2008 to 2011 under the 10th Economic Development Fund.

At the Kananaskis summit in 2002, the G8 adopted an Africa action plan that contained a detailed list of commitments, including the provision of 'technical and financial assistance so that, by 2010, African countries and regional and sub-regional organisations are able to engage more effectively to prevent and resolve violent conflict on the continent, and

undertake peace support operations in accordance with the UN Charter'.

At the Evian (2003), Sea Island (2004) and Gleneagles (2005) summits, the G8 reiterated and developed this commitment. The Evian summit adopted a more specific joint Africa/G8 action plan that provided for the establishment, equipment and training of coherent, multinational, multi-disciplinary standby capabilities at the AU and regional levels. The Sea Island summit adopted an action plan on the expansion of global capability for peace support operations with a particular focus on Africa. It consists of several elements, including training and equipping 75 000 troops by 2010, developing transportation and logistic support arrangements, increasing efforts to train carabinieri/gendarme-type forces, and establishing G8 expert level meetings to exchange information and to coordinate efforts. The Gleneagles summit called for action in the UN to boost peace building, improve the effectiveness of sanction regimes, improve international controls on arms transfers, and combat the role of 'conflict resources'. It also committed the G8 to focus more attention on humanitarian emergencies and financing for post-conflict countries.

After the Sea Island summit, a system of six-monthly consultation meetings between the AU, African peace and security institutions, G8 member countries and other partners was established.²⁸ The first two meetings were held in April and October 2005 and provided that they are held regularly, they serve as an important mechanism for ensuring the necessary coordination between the AU, sub-regional organisations and development partners as a whole (both G8 and non-G8), and for tracking the implementation of commitments.

There has been a donor scramble for support to various training institutions as the most politically attractive mode of engagement with the ASF

In the absence of a consolidated strategic plan on peace and security, or indeed for any specific component of it such as the ASF, external partners tend to have separate channels of engagement with the AU and with regional mechanisms. Some, and particularly the UK and France, also engage on a bilateral basis with individual countries to build national capacity outside either the AU or regional context.

There has been something of a donor scramble for support to the various training institutions as the most politically attractive mode of engagement with the ASF.

During a brainstorming retreat between the AU and the regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution, the AU made the following comment:

This pattern of engagement is not limited to the levels of the AU or the Regional Mechanisms.

Even within the AU or in any one Regional Mechanism, there is a tendency to have multiple channels of engagement with external partners rather than deal with them on the basis of one consolidated strategic plan on peace and security. Such an uncoordinated approach can potentially lead to the duplication of efforts, reduced efficiency in budgeting with cases of double counting, in addition to sometimes giving the appearance of competition between the Regional Mechanisms and the AU ... Coordination is not only an issue for the AU and the Regional Mechanisms, but also for external partners, who tend to operate bilaterally with each organisation or programme within an organisation and at times appearing to compete for an opportunity to fund specific initiatives. This also has a knock on effect on the organisations as they constantly struggle to meet different reporting requirements by funding partners, in addition to the potential for duplication.²⁹

At the same retreat the UK and Denmark attempted to address this lack of coordination by encouraging the AU to develop an annual plan, to which international partners could provide support without duplication of efforts and resources (par 42 of the background and concept paper):

Notwithstanding the efforts by external actors, it is, however, clear that external support and engagement with the AU and the Regional

Mechanisms will only be as organised and as coordinated as these organisations allow it to be. Without coordination of their agenda and resource requirements, it will be difficult to achieve or demand coordination by external actors in the way they engage with the AU and the Regional Mechanisms. External partners can only build on the framework and practice established and on the agenda and principles set by African organisations themselves.³⁰

All of this reinforces the requirement to establish a single point of entry for international partners at AU and regional level to coordinate and harmonise funding.

Progress at regional level

The earlier ISS paper (Cilliers & Malan 2005) reviewed the progress at regional level and only a few comments are therefore included in this paper.

West Africa

The main brigade (ECOBRI) of the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) will be comprised of 5 000 soldiers within pre-determined units, which will be ready to deploy within 90 days. Also in existence is the ESF task force, a high readiness component of the ESF consisting of 2 773 soldiers at 30 days' readiness. The latter is based on Nigeria as lead nation. West Africa has appointed a task force chief of staff, established a task force headquarters

Table 4 ASF membership

Central region (FOMAC)	Southern region (SADCBRIG)	Eastern region (EASF)	Northern region (NASBRIG)	Western region (ESF)
	Angola	Sudan	Western Sahara	Mali
	Democratic Republic of Congo	Ethiopia	Mauritania	Cape Verde
São Tomé et Príncipe	Malawi	Eritrea	Algeria	Senegal
Equatorial Guinea	Zambia	Djibouti	Tunisia	Gambia
Cameroon	Zimbabwe	Somalia	Libya	Guinea Bissau
CAR	Namibia	Kenya	Egypt	Guinea
Gabon	Swaziland	Uganda		Sierra Leone
Chad	Lesotho	Rwanda		Liberia
Congo (Brazzaville)	Botswana	Tanzania		Côte d'Ivoire
	South Africa	Burundi		Ghana
	Mozambique	Comoros		Togo
	Madagascar			Benin
	Mauritius			Nigeria
	Tanzania			Niger
				Burkina Faso

Notes

- 1 Those countries with an uncertain status or active in more than one region are indicated as such.
- 2 Angola has separate forces earmarked for the Southern Africa Standby Force as well as the Central Africa Standby Force, which is not the case with the Democratic Republic of Congo. Madagascar and Mauritius are both SADC members but still nominally part of EASF. They are not very active in either.

(in Abuja) and has an operational PLANELM. It has also completed its concept of operations, doctrine and SOPs. The region has also undertaken a training needs analysis and designated Hastings as its regional logistic base. All countries have pledged their support and the commission has undertaken a verification mission to confirm the levels of readiness among member states and has also conducted a number of command post exercises. The intention is that all contributions on standby in member states be ready and available for deployment by the end of 2008.

There are three centres of training excellence, namely the National Defence College in Abuja for strategic level, the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Accra for operational level and the Ecole de Maintien de la Paix Alioune Blondin Beye in Bamaka, Mali, for tactical level training.

Southern Africa³¹

The SADC chiefs of defense staff and police chiefs approved the modalities regarding the formation of a SADC Standby Brigade (SADCBRIG), which includes police, in July 2004 in Maseru, Lesotho and received the blessing of ministers of defense and security and the SADC heads of state shortly thereafter. SADCBRIG was officially launched in August 2007 and the region has made steady progress with its operationalisation.

Following protracted negotiations, the memorandum of understanding that underpins the associated arrangements between its members states that 'The command structure of any SADCBRIG headquarters shall strictly be representative of all contributing State Parties' (SADC 2007, art 12.2). The SADCBRIG PLANELM is functional and co-located with the SADC secretariat in Gabarone, it has a centre of training excellence (consisting of the Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre in Harare), pledged forces and elements are in place, as is the brigade headquarters.³² The region has also had a number of peacekeeping exercises (the most recent was in Botswana) but has not yet finalised the civilian component or the details around the establishment of a logistic concept and depot.

Having completed its doctrine, operational guidelines, SOPs and logistic concept and verified the various countries' pledges, the SADCBRIG lists the following remaining challenges:

- Because some pledged forces/elements are still committed elsewhere, additional forces on standby are required
- Finalisation of the standby concept and roster

- Funding
- Logistic support and location of the depot
- Operationalisation of an early warning system
- Interoperability (equipment, etc)
- Effective coordination and communication
- Capacity building, especially in a civilian environment

Eastern Africa

The absence of an appropriate regional mechanism within which to anchor the Eastern African standby force has delayed progress in this region. In 2004 Eastern Africa first mandated the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), consisting of only seven Eastern Africa troop contributing countries, to coordinate the Eastern African Standby Brigade (EASBRIG). When non-IGAD members protested against this role, the council of ministers approved the creation of an 'independent EASBRIG Coordination Mechanism' (EASBRICOM) to assume coordination from IGAD. The mechanism was to be co-located with the PLANELM in Nairobi but agreement on its location was only reached in 2007, after intervention by the heads of state. The members of the Eastern Africa Standby Force now include Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. Burundi has asked to join Eastern Africa and is therefore no longer considered to be a member of the central area. Tanzania, Madagascar and Mauritius, who had previously been members, are active in Southern Africa. Eritrea is not currently engaged with EASBRICOM.

EASBRICOM has proposed that it will anchor the Eastern African standby force within a regional peace and security mechanism to provide the political oversight and appropriate strategic decision-making system for multidimensional peace support operations. This, it is proposed, will serve as a regional mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution for Eastern Africa in accordance with article 16 of the protocol relating to the establishment of the PSC of the AU.

The proposed structure is presented in diagrammatic form in figure 7.

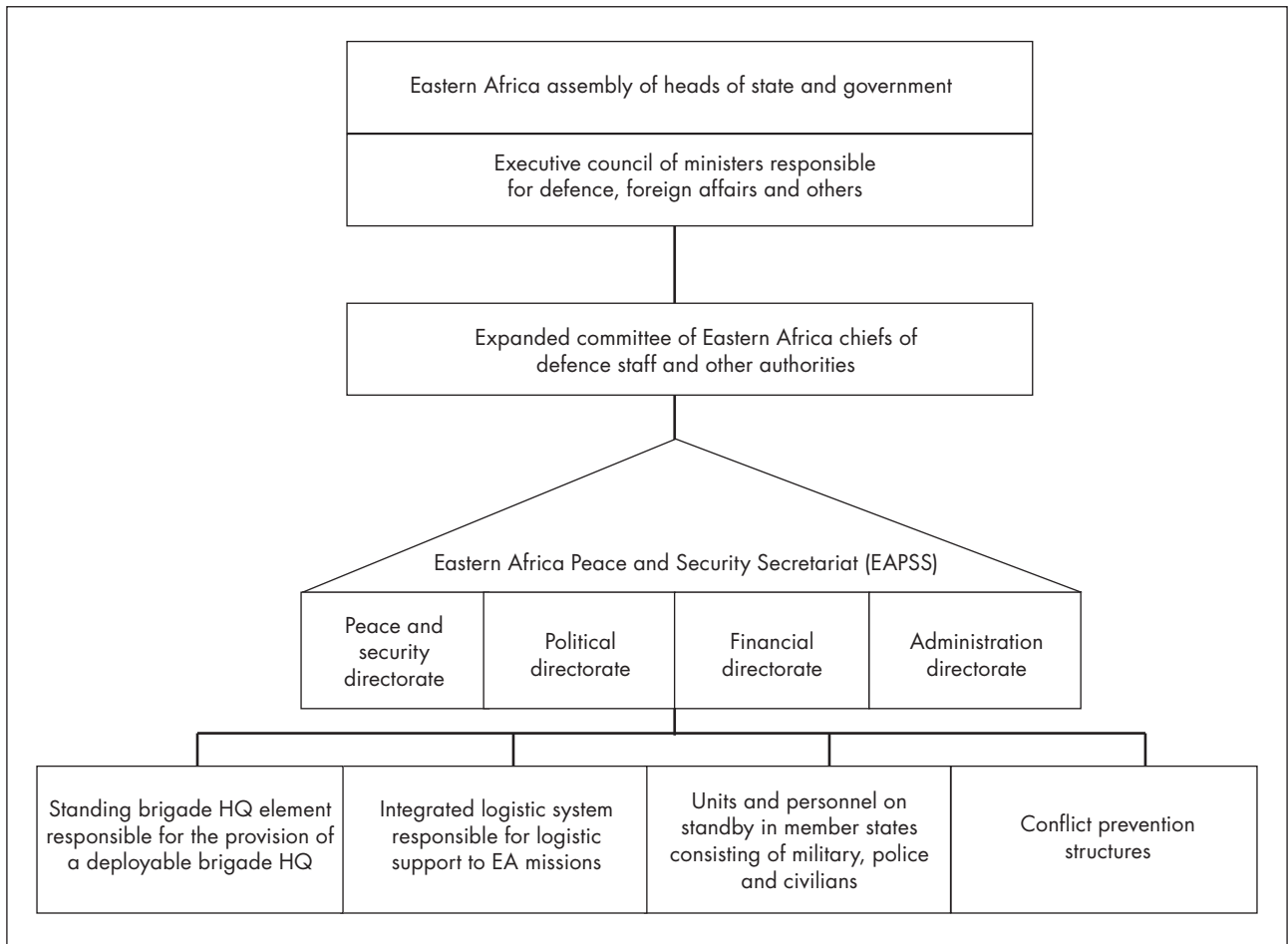
The EAPSM provides, amongst others, for the reconfiguration of EASBRICOM as an Eastern Africa Peace and Security Secretariat (EAPSS) to coordinate the mechanism. This would make it possible to include the military and other PLANELMs in the peace and security directorate.

The proposed subsidiary structures and systems of the EAPSM consist of a standing brigade headquarters

The intention is that all contributions on standby in member states be ready and available for deployment by the end of 2008



Figure 7 Structure of the Eastern Africa peace and security mechanism (EAPSM)



element (located in Ethiopia) responsible for a deployable military headquarters, an integrated logistic system, integrated training system and military, police and civilian standby components in member states. The EAPSS will also manage the Eastern Africa peace fund. The region has agreed on the establishment of a logistic base in Ethiopia (as part of the logistic system) and will shortly undertake a study of the EASBRIG logistic system. EASBRICOM currently operates on the basis of a memorandum of understanding. These recommendations do not, however, enjoy the support of all EASBRICOM member states.

EASBRIG have also identified training centres of excellence, in Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda, although there is not complete unanimity in the region on this matter, either.

Central Africa

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) is composed of 11 member states, namely Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda and São Tomé et Príncipe. Rwanda has been a member of the EASF from the beginning

and recently Burundi has also applied to join the EASF. Angola and the DRC are members of both the central and southern standby forces and the former has designated different units on standby for Central and Southern Africa.

The standing orders of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), including the Defence and Security Commission (CDS), Multinational Force of Central Africa (FOMAC) and the Early Warning Mechanism of Central Africa (MARAC), were adopted at the 10th ordinary session of heads of state and government in Malabo in June 2002. The protocol relating to the establishment of a mutual security pact in Central Africa (COPAX) entered into force two years later. Substantial progress regarding the ECCAS Standby Force dates from 2006.

In terms of force levels FOMAC, which will include sufficient air and naval assets and multinational general staff appointed by consensus, will be comprised of

- One major brigade at a low degree of notice of deployment
- Two major brigades at a medium degree of notice of deployment
- Three major brigades at the highest degree of notice of deployment



ECCAS has now approved a structure for the regional headquarters and the ECCAS PLANELM. By 2008 the regional PLANELM in Libreville had 13 staff members, consisting of six from the region and seven from Gabon, as well as the structure and equipment for the ECCAS standby brigade with a strength of 2 177. Although a national division of labour between individual countries of the region has been made, the effective realisation of the regional stand-by brigade as well as the Rapid Deployment Force still faces many technical challenges.

The proposed centres of excellence for ECCAS are CSID (Cours Supérieur Inter-Armées de Défense, created in 2005 and funded by France) in Yaoundé, Cameroon, for the strategic level, EEML (Ecole d'Etat-Major de Libreville, created in 2003 and also funded by France) in Libreville, Gabon, for operational training and EFOFAA in Luanda, Angola, for tactical level training. There are also plans to develop a school in Cameroon into an international police training centre of excellence. In addition, the region has a number of smaller national centres, including one for medical training (Libreville) and one for engineers (Congo), that could play a regional role in due course. The region has also agreed to locate the logistic base for the ECCAS Standby Force in Doula, Cameroon.

The region conducts multinational training exercises known as Exercise Barh El Ghazel every two years. The most recent exercise took place in November 2007 in N'Djamena, Chad, and its purpose was to determine the operational capabilities of ECCAS and to test the capacities of national commands for operating within the framework of the regional standby brigade. An assessment of the exercise will be conducted in 2008 to identify lessons that could be learnt from it.

Since most of the ECCAS troop contributing countries are former French colonies, the intention is that CivPol would be supplied by gendarmerie for robust missions and may include civilian police where the mission allows this. France generally plays an important role in the building of military capacities of Central African states, particularly in terms of logistics, and finance and, more importantly, training.

Before it will be able to carry out multidimensional peace operations, ECCAS will have to address a number of challenges. The first concerns the chronic lack of resources of the secretariat and the over-reliance on external support (especially the peace facility) for almost all activities of the ECCASSF. Major pillars of the ECCASSF, such as centres of excellence, the logistic base and training programme are at an effective

standstill partly because of non-existing endogenous resources and competing donor initiatives.

The second challenge concerns the weak harmonisation with the AU. Prior consultation would have eased the implementation of the rapid deployment force and the identification of logistic bases. Structural challenges such as the weak managerial capacity of the department of peace and security, the slow decision-making procedures of the COPAX and the inadequate skills of many officers attached to the regional PLANELM (especially the strategic planning) further hinder the development of an integrated regional peacekeeping force.

North Africa

The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) was originally nominated to coordinate the Northern Region but its members are divided over Western Sahara. Its problems were compounded by the fact that Egypt, potentially a major contributor, is not a member of AMU. Libya eventually emerged as the coordinator and the region established the North Africa Regional Capability (NARC) which now includes Egypt, with the exclusive responsibility of developing the North Africa standby force. The focus is still very much on the military component. A memorandum of understanding has been signed at ministerial level and by a number of heads of state and government. The brigade headquarters and PLANELM are to be located in Libya and Egypt respectively. Each country will provide training but only Egypt has offered to designate the Cairo peacekeeping training school as a regional centre of training excellence.

In reviewing the ASF progress, Africa has admittedly not met the ambitious milestones that it set, but the progress has been impressive

Conclusion

In reviewing the progress with the ASF, Africa has admittedly not met the ambitious milestones that it set for itself some four years ago. Nevertheless, the progress that has been made, has been impressive if uneven. Strategically the lack of adequate financial resources to meet the demands of peacekeeping in Africa remains the most obvious hurdle. With regard to finances, the commission of the AU has undergone a very steep learning curve on how to handle the massive budgets relating to the African peacekeeping function. For example, the AU's first peacekeeping operation, AMIB, had an approved budget of approximately US \$130 million per year – at a time when the annual budget of the entire AU was about US \$32 million. The second mission, AMIS, was even larger with close to 8 000 personnel and an annual budget of approximately US \$466 million.³³

While the lack of predictable financing for operations has undoubtedly been an important consideration, perhaps a more important factor in the halting progress compared to the original timeline has been a lack of capacity at the level of the AU. Add to this that the AU PLANELM has had only four staff members for several years, and the lack of capacity translates into an absence of leadership. Whereas the 2005 roadmap had emphasised the need for the early secondment of five experienced officers from African member states as a first step towards the expansion of the AU PLANELM to its required key staff of 15, this has not taken place. Tragically, the appointed chief of staff of the ASF and head of the AU PLANELM, Maj-Gen Hassan from Nigeria, passed away only 13 months after assuming his position. He has not been replaced, while the AU PLANELM numbers have increased by only one to five members. Thus the AU PLANELM has had to make do with a severely limited staff complement for several years – outnumbered at all times by the military staffs attached to embassies in Addis Ababa from donor countries and AU member states, who are all eager to assist but often overwhelm the AU staffs (who also have had to deal with a much more immediate crisis in Darfur). In this vacuum, and in the absence of guidance from Addis Ababa, regions have applied their own interpretation to the roadmap.

In preparation for a recent experts working session in Algiers, the commission of the AU listed the following challenges about the key roles in future African peace operations:³⁴

- (a) The likelihood that the UN will stage robust operations or enforcement missions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter remains small for the foreseeable future. The AU and the regional mechanisms will, therefore, continue to face the challenge of summoning the political will as well as the capacity to plan and execute robust missions.
- (b) While some of the ongoing situations of armed conflict will remain a challenge for some time to come, emerging trends suggest that such incidents of large-scale armed conflict will gradually decline in Africa. However, situations of low intensity conflict are likely to remain a challenge. While these situations do not necessarily pose significant threats to international peace and security, they do constitute a threat to stability and sustainable development in the affected countries. As such situations of this nature will occupy the attention of the AU and the regional mechanisms and will be the focus of conflict prevention and management.
- (c) An operational African peace and security architecture will therefore need to develop effective early response systems and effective support for

mediation efforts through, for example, preventive deployment.

- (d) A standby force implies that it consists of several components, including, for example, military, police and civilian dimensions. However, there has been more focus and attention on the military components. Although the AU has recognised this lack, there is a need for more targeted attention to rectify this shortcoming.
- (e) Training of future peace operations personnel (ie the ASF) must of necessity address the different dimensions of the challenges of conflict and post-conflict environments in which such persons will operate. This means that more attention should be given to the civilian dimension, including child protection, gender issues, human rights, civil affairs, economic recovery and HIV/AIDS issues, in addition to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration and security sector reform programmes.
- (f) African organisations have not demonstrated the ability to mobilise the financial resources required to address post-conflict, reconstruction, and development needs on their own. However,

they can nonetheless set the agenda for external and other partners in terms of articulating priority approaches to peculiar needs of the targeted post-conflict environments. The AU policy on post-conflict, reconstruction, and development needs does articulate the principles and approaches, and the on-going process of developing operational guidelines will be particularly relevant in guiding the training of ASF personnel for future missions.

The standby force concept adopted by Africa is complex and ambitious, but very necessary. Implementation inevitably presents numerous practical challenges,

particularly given the time constraints for the realisation of this vision. The original concept presented to African Chiefs of Defence and Security at their 2003 meeting in Addis Ababa was for a single on-call standby brigade level force that would be available to the AU as a first priority and was modelled on the UN Standby High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG). This arrangement would have allowed for direct agreements between the AU and member states, but force levels would clearly have been inadequate for anything but the most modest commitments.

The insertion of an additional level of regional political control between the AU and its member states necessarily complicated matters and it has taken some time to come to the realisation that the primary role of the regions is force preparation on behalf of the continental structure, and that of the AU is force employment – and this is still not a commonly accepted view.

The way forward is that a more integrated concept of peace and security should be developed between the AU and the UN



These structural problems have been compounded by the distraction of Darfur at the continental level and at times also by a lack of coordination and engagement between the AU and regions. The result is that the development of the different ASF components has not adhered to a single coherent concept. Instead of a continental logistic system able to support the deployment of any component of the ASF elsewhere on the continent, the ASF has the beginnings of regional logistic systems based on political considerations. The same challenges inform various components of the training, command, control and other systems. The requirement that components of the ASF in each region be parcelled out between countries, based on political and not practical considerations, will continue to present many problems in the future.

A second less tangible problem is that of ownership. Some African partners have seized on the ASF concept to such a degree that it sometimes undermines African ownership. This is most pronounced in West and East Africa, where the number of officers seconded from donor countries to training institutions, PLANELMs and regional structures are rapidly outnumbering their African compatriots. Often these embedded 'advisors' control significantly more resources than the African commanders they nominally report to, are paid several times the salaries that accrue to the former and can play a decisive role through their direct access to even larger purses located in their capitals, or under the control of regional embassies in African capitals. It is therefore not uncommon to find middle ranking expatriate officers from European countries effectively in control of key aspects of ASF preparations, and exerting considerable influence on the concepts, standards and decisions taken at every level. Only SADC has resisted such an infiltration.

While Africans often have the greater political acumen, these advisors are often technically more capable than their African counterparts (apart from the fact that they are subject to less oversight and have access to more resources). For their part the Africans sometimes deliberately take a back seat, engaging in an old game of extracting the maximum benefit from their benefactors. This may take the form of providing the absolute minimum of funds and resources to a PLANELM, training institution or facility in the knowledge that it is only a question of time before a donor, frustrated by the lack of progress, will step in to pick up the tab. There is also considerable competition between Africa's international partners for demonstrable impact, which they hope will translate into influence, which leads to insufficient information sharing between, for example, the UK/France and Scandinavian partners, as well as with and between countries such as the Netherlands and Canada. Conversely, a concerted effort by the UK and Denmark has resulted in a considerable improvement in donor coordination in

recent years, although the AU could improve on the use that it makes of regular meetings and briefings.

In all this manoeuvring for influence and funding, the most important aspect is that the AU and the various regions should ensure that they assume ownership and drive donor support and not the other way around. For example, there should be mutual accountability between the friends of EASBRIG and the EASBRIG development support committee that were launched in Nairobi during December 2007. Whereas the current practice is often that the Africans brief their international partners on progress, planning and requirements, these mechanisms should provide for sharing of all information on bilateral and multilateral support efforts that impact upon ASF capabilities.

When all is said and done, African peacekeeping will at some point have to be placed on a more sustainable basis. Arguably, the way forward in all of this is that a more integrated concept of peace and security should be developed between the AU and the UN. In effect, the degree of support and succour that the UN has provided to the ASF has been a disappointment. Instead of leading, the UN has followed.

Building on the 2004 report of the secretary general's high-level panel on threats, challenges and change, entitled 'A more secure world: our shared responsibility', the subsequent 2005 report of the secretary general, entitled 'In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all', included the following paragraph (par 112):

I appeal to Member States to do more to ensure that the UN has effective capacities for peacekeeping, commensurate with the demands that they place upon it. In particular, I urge them to improve our deployment options by creating strategic reserves that can be deployed rapidly, within the framework of UN arrangements. UN capacity should not be developed in competition with the admirable efforts now being made by many regional organizations but in cooperation with them. Decisions by the European Union to create standby battle groups, for instance, and by the AU to create African reserve capacities, are a very valuable complement to our own efforts. **Indeed, I believe the time is now ripe for a decisive move forward: the establishment of an interlocking system of peacekeeping capacities that will enable the UN to work with relevant regional organizations in predictable and reliable partnerships.**

Thus far the discussions regarding the future way in which the UN can respond to the challenges of peace and security on the African continent have revolved around the expanded use of Chapter VIII of

the Charter of the UN. In articles 52 to 54 the drafters made provision for the complementary role of regional organisations in the maintenance of international peace and security, on condition that such arrangements and activities are consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN, that the UN security council is kept fully informed of such activities and with the clear proviso that enforcement action requires the (prior) authorisation of the UN security council.

Perhaps it is time that the UN play a more forceful and meaningful role in the ASF. Although the UN established a peacekeeping support cell within the Peace and Security Operations Division (PSOD) in mid 2007, much more can and should be done if we are to move towards an integrated system that will play a meaningful part in keeping peace on our continent.

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Notes

- 1 Article 3(f) of the Constitutive Act of the AU clearly states that the AU has primary responsibility for the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa while article 7.2 makes it clear that the PSC acts on behalf of its member states when carrying out duties relating to peace and security. Articles 7(j) and 16(9) of the PSC protocol are explicit in tasking the PSC and the chairperson of

the commission of the AU with harmonisation and coordination of the activities of the regional mechanisms in the area of peace and security.

- 2 Adapted from the log concept, par 26. These figures do not fully correspond with those in the 2003 roadmap and in certain instances, for example armoured vehicles, would be insufficient for deployment in a mission that requires more robust capabilities.
- 3 In West Africa Ghana, a major troop contributing country, is already under tremendous strain because of the deployment of four battalions and preparation of an additional battalion for deployment in the UN – AU Mission in Darfur. With all its infantry units either on deployment or preparing for deployment, Ghana has committed a level two field hospital and company of engineers to the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) and is lobbying for a system whereby it guarantees a particular capacity, and then rotates the commitment internally in accordance with its own troop deployment schedule. By implication Ghana will therefore not be providing a dedicated and named capacity as part of the ESF/ASF, and will furthermore rotate the capacity according to its internal operational schedules. If adopted by a region or a number of countries, such an approach could result in an ASF capacity that cannot be verified and tested at any point in time. (Information based on an interview with Odetei 2008.)
- 4 In the case of ECOWAS and SADC the regional brigade headquarters and PLANELM are co-located in Abuja and Gabarone. In the case of Eastern Africa, member states have agreed on the establishment of a standing brigade headquarters element in Addis Ababa that is separate from the PLANELM and EASBRICOM secretariats in Nairobi. Technically, the latter arrangement is contrary to AU guidelines but it resulted from the concern amongst the other members of the region about the concentration of EASF resources in Kenya.
- 5 From the executive summary on the meeting of experts on the workshops for the formulation of African Standby Force policies, held in Addis Ababa between 28 November and 2 December 2005.
- 6 These include personnel, CIMIC, CIS, command and control, civilian component, logistics, military information, operations, police, and public information.
- 7 D Baly, Presentation on the development of the African Standby Force, Roadmap II, slide 20.
- 8 Draft African Standby Force training policy, as of 6 October 2006, pp 6–7 (harmonised with Doctrine/C3IS/Log/Civ Dim/SOPs 3 Oct 2006).
- 9 Document on the evaluation and validation and centres of excellence, developed during an AU training and evaluation workshop held in Luanda, Angola on 7 January 2008. (Harmonised with Doctrine, C3IS, LOG/Civilian Dimension/SOPS) (3 October 2006). The list of instruction that could be provided by the centres of excellence include courses on train-the-trainer; the four types of training areas (individual, collective, command and staff, and specialist); public information and media operations; joint operational planning for staff; crisis management and contingency planning; intelligence analysis and management; negotiation; disarmament,



- demobilisation and reintegration; CIMIC; humanitarian, international human rights and child protection legislation; sexual exploitation and abuse; cultural awareness; gender awareness; stress management; senior management and leadership; the role of civilian police in PSOs; election monitoring/observers; HIV/AIDS; military observers (MILOBs); and land mine awareness and de-mining.
- 10 Ibid, par 4.
 - 11 D Baly, op cit, slides 7 & 8.
 - 12 Roadmap for the operationalisation of the African Standby Force, 22–23 March 2005, par 23 (EXP/AU-RECs/ASF/4(I)).
 - 13 Planning multi-dimensional peace support operations. Amended draft, November 2006, chapter 7, par 47.
 - 14 Mudave, D S L, Draft support concept for African Standby Force (ASF) peace support operations, 7 August 2007, par 22.
 - 15 In terms of the draft logistic concept of August 2007 (par 27): ‘Until the ASF stand-by brigades are able to provide the required level of logistic support organically, there will be a need for innovative solutions to be developed. One such solution might be to develop a Lead Nation Concept for specific logistic capabilities, such as strategic lift, medical services, mission HQ provision etc.’
 - 16 Calculated from data provided at <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/bnote.htm> [accessed 9 March 2008].
 - 17 The Brahimi Panel on UN Peace Operations was convened by the UN secretary general in March 2000 to ‘assess the shortcomings of the existing [UN] system and make frank, specific and realistic recommendations for change’. The report of the panel, which was led by Lakhdar Brahimi, a former Algerian foreign minister. was submitted on 21 August 2000 (UN 2000).
 - 18 For example, article 12.5 of the memorandum of understanding that established the SADC standby brigade states: ‘The SADC Summit shall appoint a Force Commander, Commissioner of Police and Head of the Civilian Component for each specific mission from the Personnel Contributing State Parties. These appointed officers shall report to the Special Representative, while the Military Contingent Commanders shall report to the Force Commander.’ According to the PSC protocol, ratified by all SADC members, the chairperson of the commission appoints these key staff in the case of ASF missions. SADC also requires that ‘[t]he SADCBRIG shall only be deployed on the authority of the SADC Summit’. See articles 7.1(k), 13.13, 13.4, 13.15 and 13.16.
 - 19 In chapter 7 the ASF doctrine refers to a ‘comprehensive peace support operations plan’.
 - 20 Policy framework for the establishment of the African Standby Force and military staff committee, par 5.2c.
 - 21 Policy framework for the establishment of the African Standby Force and military staff committee, par 1.4a, as quoted in par 4 of a concept paper delivered at the workshop on the development of the ASF’s rapid deployment capability, held in June 2007.
 - 22 Presentation on the rapid deployment capability on 29 November 2007.
 - 23 This was not the original intention, in which the task force was seen as part and parcel of the ESF.
 - 24 Background and concept paper (par 35) for the brainstorming retreat between the AU and the regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution, at Algiers, Algeria on 5 and 6 January 2008.
 - 25 Five per cent of AU members’ contributions go to the peace fund, which would have totalled \$4 350 000 in 2007 if all members had paid their contributions (26 out of 53 have not).
 - 26 In 2005/6 South Africa contributed R105 million in membership fees to the AU (South Africa 2005/6:65).
 - 27 Consisting of an initial amount of €250 million, replenished by €50 million in 2006.
 - 28 Communiqué on the consultation between the AU, the member countries of the G8 and other partners and African peace and security institutions at Addis Ababa on 4 April 2005.
 - 29 Background and concept paper, op cit, (para 39 & 40)
 - 30 Brainstorming retreat between the AU and the regional mechanisms, op cit, par 42.
 - 31 Brig-Gen G M Yekelo, Presentation Status and Way Forward for the SADCSF, 14 July 2007.
 - 32 The SADC standby brigade, which can list eight helicopters and six medium lift transport aircraft, is perhaps better off than most other regions. South Africa has also pledged substantial naval assets (five harbour patrol boats and a large ship) and Angola has also pledged a marine platoon. Various countries have pledged 137 military observers and Zambia 200 civilian police.
 - 33 Background and concept paper, op cit, par 34.
 - 34 Ibid, par 31.

Media Statement: ISS the leading Think Tank in Sub-Saharan Africa

In a first global survey of think tanks, the Institute for Security Studies has been identified as the leading think tank in Sub-Saharan Africa. The survey was carried out by the Foreign Policy Research Institute, an independent, non-profit organisation based in Philadelphia USA, devoted to advanced research and public education on international affairs.

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About this paper

This paper provides an update and commentary on the progress that has been made during the last three years on the establishment of the African Standby Force. After providing an overview of the concept, subsequent sections deal with the command and control relationships between the African Union, the United Nations and sub-regional organisations. The paper finds that progress at regional level has been steady, if uneven and largely limited to southern, western and eastern Africa. While Africa has seen good progress with regard to training, development of doctrine, Standard Operating Procedures, command and control concepts and the like, the issue of logistics remains hugely problematic, as does the requirement for greater capacity and leadership at the level of the AU Commission.

About the author

DR JAKKIE CILLIERS has BMil (BA), BA Hons, MA (*cum laude*) and DLitt et Phil degrees from the Universities of Stellenbosch and South Africa. He co-founded the Institute for Defence Policy during 1990, which subsequently became the Institute for Security Studies (ISS). Since 1993 Dr Cilliers has served as executive director of the ISS. Awards and decorations he has received include the Bronze Medal from the South African Society for the Advancement of Science and the H Bradlow Research Bursary. Dr Cilliers has presented numerous papers at conferences and seminars and is a regular commentator on local and international radio and television. He regularly lectures on security issues and has published, edited and contributed to a large number of journals, books and other publications, serving on a number of boards and committees.

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