



Summary of Remarks
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Press Conference

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INTRODUCTION

It is also a privilege for me to be here today together with Ambassador BRYLLE to outline some details of this bridging operation following yesterday's decision by the Council of Ministers to formally launch the operation. I propose to outline to you some details of the operation from a military perspective.

AS OPERATIONAL COMMANDER, it is my task to translate diplomatic and political policy into military action. That involves giving purpose, direction and motivation to a 3.700 strong multinational force that will deploy to a difficult operational environment (into very poor countries in humanitarian crisis). I and my staff (representing 22 nationalities) at the military strategic level of the EU Operational Headquarters at Mont Valérien in Paris have been busy planning to-date. Having worked over the last months on all the military planning documents required for the operation, culminating in the OPLAN approved by the Council yesterday, we have concluded the last part of the pre-conditions for deployment phase.

As regards STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES, our key goal is the provision of a SASE (Safe and Secure Environment). Under this security umbrella it is our task :

- to protect civilians in danger, particularly refugees and displaced persons ;
- to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and the free movement of humanitarian personnel by helping to improve security in the area of operations ;
- to contribute to protecting United Nations personnel, facilities, installations and equipment and to ensuring the security and freedom of movement of its staff and United Nations and associated personnel.

The Force Commander is now in theatre and the Force Headquarters has during recent weeks begun its deployment to theatre to prepare for the start of the operation. The initial entry forces will be multinational (with Austrian, French, Belgian, Irish and Swedish troops), supported by an Italian field hospital, which demonstrates the European identity of EUFOR. This initial entry force will contribute to the establishment of a visible, credible, impartial and flexible force.

It will be the task of the Force Commander Brigadier General Jean Philippe Ganascia on the ground at the operational and tactical level to implement these objectives. What is envisaged is high-visibility short, medium and long range mobile patrolling as well as Quick Reaction Force (QRF) interventions where and when necessary.

It remains however **a complex operation**. Chad, the Central African Republic, together with neighbouring Darfur and Sudan remains a challenging part of the world. The security situation is volatile and ever-changing. During our reconnaissance we were struck by :

- the **vastness** of the area (much of it unpopulated),
- the **unforgiving nature** of the terrain (landscape is austere),
- the **severe** climate (rainy season / heat),
- the fact that Chad and CAR are **not economic** hubs with very little infrastructure, for example it has only 500 km of paved road,
- and that it is one of the **most unstable zones** in Africa.

DEPLOYMENT

EUFOR Tchad/RCA will deploy in N'Djamena with a Force Headquarters in Abéché as well as three (3) multinational Battalions (Irish, French and Polish) forward colocated with MINURCAT in a line south to north from BIRAO through GOZ BEIDA, FORCHANA and IRIBA.

I see the area of operations divided broadly into three distinct areas for the purpose of our mission, NORTH, CENTRE and SOUTH :

- the northern area is predominantly the area where the refugee problem is concentrated and will require an EUFOR PRESENCE FOR SECURITY OPERATIONS,
- in DAR SILA, the centre of the area of operations, the refugee and IDP's situation will require a ROBUST SECURITY PRESENCE. It is in this area that I see the optimum opportunity for EUFOR to seize the initiative and progress towards mission accomplishment by creating the necessary confidence for the IDPs to begin to return to their homes safely,
- in the south of the area of operations, the transiting of CAR from Sudan to Chad by rebel groups and associated banditry is a destabilizing factor and must be deterred on both sides of the Chad/CAR border.

Special Operation Forces (SOF) will deploy into Chad and CAR acting as a part of the Initial Entry Force (IEF) conducting operations in order to contribute to EUFOR Tchad/RCA independant situational awareness through :

- liaison,
- information gathering,
- and preparation for main force deployment.

Our deployment plans see Initial Operational Capability (IOC) achieved in (4-6 weeks) after yesterday's decision to launch the operation which will bring us to early March. Forces will then progressively move northwards, incrementally encompassing the area of operations, achieving Full Operational Capability (FOC) planned for mid-May before the rainy season.

At FOC, I expect EUFOR Tchad/RCA to be the most highly representative multinational EUFOR operation in Africa to-date.

As already pointed out by EUSR Brylle, the deployment of this EU operation has been agreed with and welcomed by the Governments of both Chad and the Central African Republic. EUFOR Tchad/RCA will actively work for an improvement of the security situation in Chad and Central African Republic and in this context it will be conducted in a neutral, impartial and independent

manner. Throughout the mission, EUFOR Tchad/RCA will coordinate closely with the United Nations to include colocation in order to facilitate MINURCAT. We will also coordinate with the humanitarian and development organisations present in Chad and CAR. We have already had considerable contact with humanitarian and development organisations active on the ground. Later this afternoon I am meeting with NGO representatives here in Brussels. We will of course cooperate with the host states. In its Resolution 1778 (2007), the UN Security Council approved the establishment of MINURCAT and authorised the EU to deploy forces in these countries for a period of 12 months from the declaration of Initial Operational Capability.

CONCLUSION

There is much to be done to bring peace to this area.

The regional situation is volatile and sensitive with ongoing tensions between Sudan and Chad. The implementation of recent peace agreements between rebel groups and Chad has not been successful. Some factions and members of the rebel groups have regrouped and continued with their hostile activities as recent incidents have shown. Add to this the internal disputes. All this adversely affects the local populations, I.D.P.s and refugees throughout the area.

The message coming to us is that EUFOR is therefore keenly awaited on the ground by the people.

The deployment and the sustainability of the force will be very challenging and will require every effort to provide the means to accomplish the mission. The logistic process is built upon the ability to deliver materiel and personnel across vast distances. The area of operations is located in the middle of Africa, an area posing a logistical Everest. It is located 2,000 kms from the nearest seaport and 4,450 kms from Brussels. Our intention therefore is that within 12 months we will have complied with our strategic goal and contributed to providing a safe and secure environment in

that **peoples lives will have been made safer, more secure, the situation will have been stabilised, and progress will have been made** allowing the beginning of the return of IDPs and economic benefits to begin to be brought about.

In this context I am mindful that this **EU bridging operation is an important addition to the overall international efforts to facilitate a solution to the Darfur crisis in the regional context.**