Causes and Consequences of the EU’s Military Intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo: A Realist Explanation*

CATHERINE GEGOUT**

1 Introduction

According to International Rescue Committee data from April 2003, an estimated 3.3 million people died in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) between 1998 and 2003. Eight African states (Namibia, Angola, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Chad and Sudan) were involved.1 African (especially from South Africa and Botswana), American, Belgian, British, French and EU diplomats all acted as mediators in the conflict.

Most of the conflict occurred in Eastern Congo where more than 20 million people live. This region has the highest death rate of any conflict region at present, with mortality rates for children under five ranging up to nearly 30 per cent a year in areas of extreme insecurity.2 During summer 2003, in the South Kivu Province, more than 5 000 women and young children had reported being raped.3 In Eastern Congo, people have no access to services of any kind – no clean water, health, education, transport or housing.4 The international community – states, international organizations and NGOs – does not seem to have responded adequately to this crisis.

This article focuses on EU military intervention in summer 2003. On 12 June 2003, the EU sent 2 000 troops to the north east of the DRC in Bunia. This EU mission was code-named ‘Artemis’. Its aim was to contribute to the stabilization of the security conditions and the improvement of

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** Dr Gegout is currently a Marie-Curie Research Fellow at the London School of Economics. Her research focuses upon European intervention in Africa. She completed her PhD at the European University Institute, Florence, and has taught as a Fulbright scholar at the University of Pittsburgh.

3 Tony Hall, US ambassador to the UN World Food Programme said that ‘women have paid most dearly for this war . . . among them was a woman who saw her seven children slaughtered, her three daughters having been raped before they were killed. On top of it all, this woman gave birth to a child resulting from the rape’ (Irin, 1 October 2003, and CNN, 4 November 2003).
the humanitarian situation in Bunia. This operation ended officially on 1 September 2003.

The research questions this article addresses are the following: why did the EU intervene in the DRC? What are the implications of this EU intervention for cooperation among EU states on military issues, future EU military interventions, and EU presence and actoriness in the world?

This article shows that realism can explain EU policy towards the DRC. Realism though, at first glance, does not seem to consider military intervention in an African state as plausible. Hoffmann, for instance, stresses that neo-realists are critical of intervention, as they believe that great powers should concentrate on their security, prevent conflicts among major powers and combat terrorism. Their forces must not be used for conflicts which are not a threat to their interests. For Mandelbaum and Gray, the national interest is a non-moral notion. Forsythe also distinguishes between a realist definition of interests and the liberal principle of international human rights. It is because of this national interest that the USA does not intervene in states of no strategic importance or economic value, or with which it has no historical, geographical or sentimental ties. If we assume, as realists seem to do, that morality is not a national interest and that states should primarily be concerned with preserving their security, then realism does not seem to explain European involvement in the DRC.

Posen and Ross however draw a distinction between 'minimal' and 'maximal' realists, who have different positions on when a state should intervene in a conflict. This distinction is relevant and used in this article. For minimal realists (Layne, Tucker, Ravenal, Buchanan, Bandow and Nordlinger) who study the role of the USA in world politics, the USA should not intervene military in any conflict in the Third World. This minimal realist

theory would also expect European states and the European Union to act as ‘neo-isolationists’: Africa is not a threat to Europe, and intervention would be a mistake as it would mean taking sides and creating enemies. This article shows that French, British and European Union actors did not act in the DRC according to minimal realist expectations.

For maximal realists (Layne 1996, Gilpin 1981), world order and peace can only be ensured by a preponderance of US power. The USA must be primus solus. This corresponds to the theory of hegemonic stability, where a hegemon guarantees the stability of the international system. Conflicts in the Third World, such as ethnic conflicts, should be of little concern to great powers.

However, if we analyse maximal realism further, Posen and Ross underline that, as regards the USA, ‘there is no obvious security rational for humanitarian military operations, though some operations (such as Bosnia) may offer opportunities to demonstrate and assert US power and leadership’.

If we apply maximal realism to the action of European powers, they too could intervene in a third state if this enhanced their power and leadership. Art goes even further and foresees a possible intervention in a third country under the following five conditions: the nation invaded is small, it is militarily weak, the intervention is welcomed by the bulk of the populace, the costs in casualties are relatively low, and the probability of success is high.

Maximal realism seems to be the best way to explain EU policy towards the DRC. The EU acts after evaluating the costs and benefits of an intervention, and not merely because of the humanitarian crisis in the DRC.

In terms of cooperation among Member States within the EU framework, the Artemis mission does not appear to have created long-term close relationships between military, foreign affairs and political officials. Realism also seems relevant to explain cooperation among Member States’ officials; this will only occur when it is in the interest of the states to do so.

Finally, the Artemis mission can be considered as a ‘one-off’ mission, and not as the first EU military intervention of a series of interventions. As expected by realism, the EU is only likely to intervene in areas of strategic and economic importance, and at a low cost of military casualties.

In order to analyse the causes and consequences of the EU Artemis mission in the DRC in summer 2003, this article looks both at the context in which this mission took place, namely the situation in the DRC itself, and at the history of EU policy in Africa (section II). It then analyses the reasons for the EU Artemis intervention in the DRC (section III). Finally, it focuses on the implications of Artemis for future EU military interventions, and EU presence and actorness in the world (section IV).

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11 Posen and Ross, note 8 above, p. 32.
II 1998–2004: The DRC War and a Growing EU Military Role and Interest in Africa

From 1998 until 2004, as the DRC was going through a war and a difficult transition period, the EU was developing both its military capabilities and an apparent interest in the African continent. The DRC war, which saw foreign, international and internal wars being fought simultaneously, lasted from 1998 until summer 2003, when a transitional power-sharing government was set up.\textsuperscript{13} Tables 1 and 2 (over) detail the members of the transitional government and their responsibilities on 17 July 2003.

Two years after the transition government was set up, the political relations among government officials and the local situation in the east of the DRC (in North and South Kivu and in the area around Bunia) remain very unstable. There were strong disagreements between the President Joseph Kabila and the Vice-President Jean-Pierre Bemba, head of the once-rebel Mouvement de Libération du Congo (MLC). In January 2005, the International Rescue Committee believed that Congo’s war was still killing 1 000 people a day.\textsuperscript{14} Elections are due to take place in June 2005, but they are likely to take place at a later date (either December 2005 or before June 2006, according to the Pretoria Peace Agreement of July 2003) as the security of the people must be assured first.

At the same time as the DRC crisis was unfolding, the EU was establishing military structures, and cooperation between the two main European actors in Africa, the United Kingdom and France, was officially increased. The Joint Declaration on European Defence (4 December 1998) issued at the British-French Summit, Saint Malo, stated that:

In order for the European Union to take decisions and approve military action where the Alliance as a whole is not engaged, the Union must be given appropriate structures and a capacity for analysis of situations, sources of intelligence, and a capability for relevant strategic planning, without unnecessary duplication, taking account of the existing assets of the WEU [Western European Union] and the evolution of its relations with the EU. In this regard, the European Union will also need to have recourse to suitable military means (European capabilities pre-designated within NATO’s European pillar or national or multinational European means outside the NATO framework).


\textsuperscript{14} The Economist, 6 January 2005.
**Table 1. President Joseph Kabila’s power-sharing government**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kabila’s four vice-presidents</th>
<th>Political party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jean-Pierre Bemba</td>
<td>Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo (MLC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mbusa Nyamwisi</td>
<td>Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-Mouvement de Libération (pro-Ugandan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger Lumbala</td>
<td>RCD National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azarias Ruberwa</td>
<td>Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-Goma (RCD-Goma)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Africa Confidential*, 17 May 2002 and 10 October 2003

**Table 2. Details of the power-sharing government**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Political party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief of Staff</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Ground Forces</td>
<td>RCD with its own Gen. Sylvain Buki from Katanga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two deputies of the Chief of Staff</td>
<td>MLC + government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy Commander</td>
<td>MLC ( + Deputy: RCD-Goma)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Force Commander</td>
<td>Government ( + Deputy: MLC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Operations Directorate, determining where and how forces will be used</td>
<td>MLC ( + Deputy: government)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>Government ( + Deputy: RCD-ML)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Command of the ten military regions, with their strategic bases (three Air Force, four Naval)</td>
<td>Government (six regions) and MLC, RCD-Goma and MaiMai (four other regions)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Africa Confidential*, 11 July 2003

This Franco-British declaration represents a milestone in the history of the construction of a Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP). It enabled the EU to become competent in military (headquarters, intelligence, armament) and defence issues, and this autonomously from NATO. On the basis of St Malo, the EU developed military capabilities. The Helsinki European Council in December 1999 created a headline goal of a European Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) comprising 60 000 troops deployable within 60 days for a mission of at least a year by 2003. As this goal was not attained, the EU Member States agreed on 22 November 2004 to create battle groups (with

At St Malo, France and the United Kingdom also decided to cooperate in the field of their policies towards Africa.\(^{15}\) These European states wished to promote European values in Africa. They felt they were responsible and should play a particular role in Africa. They wanted to intensify their exchange of information on the situation in Africa and organize joint visits of ministers and officials. They were especially concerned with the crisis in the Great Lakes region, and wished to cooperate to mediate and convince the actors responsible for the crisis to agree to a peace conference. Then, in Cahors, the United Kingdom and France stressed their desire to work together to address political crises in Africa.\(^{16}\) Chirac mentioned that the ‘profound historic link with Africa’ was the reason for acting.

At the Toucquet Summit (4 February 2003), Chirac and Blair adopted a broad view of policies towards Africa. They stressed the importance of addressing both political and economic matters such as the necessity to support NEPAD (the New Plan for Africa’s Development) and to create an international finance facility. They also emphasized their desire to support the efforts of the AU (African Union) and to strengthen Africa’s peacekeeping capability. Toucquet thus meant switching their responsibility to intervene militarily in Africa to Africans themselves. The Toucquet summit emphasized the need for cooperation between France and the United Kingdom on the DRC crisis. It stated that ‘our two countries will explore how to work together to build a DRC national army’. France and the United Kingdom also discussed their policies towards Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia and Zimbabwe. They declared they were concerned with the plundering and illegal exporting of natural resources and the development of organized crime in Sub-Saharan Africa. Finally, Chirac and Blair decided to develop dialogue between embassies and between foreign affairs officials.

In November 2003, at Lancaster House, France and the United Kingdom confirmed their willingness to cooperate to enhance their development and aid policies towards Africa, and agreed to discuss issues such as organized crime and terrorism. Two documents were issued at the Lancaster House Summit, namely the Declaration on Africa and the Action plan on organized crime in Africa.

In the Declaration on Africa, France and the United Kingdom emphasized the role of African organizations which carried out peace support operations in countries such as Liberia, Côte d’Ivoire, Burundi, Central African Republic and Sudan (Darfur) in 2004. France and the United Kingdom wanted to: reinforce cooperation between the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping

\(^{15}\) ‘Déclaration conjointe sur le renforcement de la cooperation’, 4 December 1998.

\(^{16}\) Franco-British Summit, 9 February 2001.
Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Ghana and the *Ecole de Maintien de la Paix* in Mali; provide military experts to ECOWAS (the Economic Community Of West African States) in Abuja; and cooperate in the RECAMP IV programme (which is organized by France) in Ghana and Benin in 2004. France and the United Kingdom explicitly set out the role of the EU military in Africa:

Rapidly deployable EU Battle Groups should be operational as soon as possible in 2005. They would allow the EU to respond quickly to a crisis in Africa while giving time for the AU or the UN to prepare a longer-term intervention.

The EU would be capable of sending a short-term mission to Africa in order to support either the UN or the African Union.

The Action plan on organized crime in Africa was extremely detailed. France and the United Kingdom emphasized that they would support African states in fighting transnational criminal networks (including people smuggling, money laundering, small-arms trafficking and drug-trafficking networks) and corruption, and improve transparency.

A European military intervention in the DRC to prevent the spread of violence seems a logical consequence of this will to set up effective EU capabilities, and of this growing interest in Africa’s development. The next section shows that realism explains the EU Artemis mission: this mission was possible because the European states made a cost-benefit analysis, and not because they felt obliged to act on humanitarian grounds.

III The Artemis Military Mission in the DRC

1. EU Policies towards the DRC: The Context in which Artemis was Developed

The EU has helped economically with programmes of aid and cooperation, developed a mediation role in the DRC crisis, and acted militarily with the Artemis mission.

In terms of aid policy, despite the fact that cooperation with Zaire was suspended on 22 January 1992, the EC injected on average EUR40–50 million per year in the DRC. The Commission took over part of the functions of the government in infrastructural work, urban development and humanitarian aid. The Commission resumed its direct cooperation with the DRC government on 5 February 2002. However, if one compares the amount of aid given to the DRC compared to that given to other African states, the EU

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did not seem to have much interest in the DRC. Indeed, according to an EU Commission document, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Zambia all got more funding than the DRC.  

In the diplomatic field, in 1996, the EU set up a European electoral unit. It also created a mandate for a special envoy for the Great Lakes regions, Aldo Ajello, to work with the UN, the then OAU (Organization of African Unity) and prominent African figures to address the DRC war. Then, in 1999, the EU financially supported the implementation of the Lusaka ceasefire agreement and the peace process in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In November 2001, Solana, Patten and the Belgian Presidency visited the DRC.

The EU also developed links with other international institutions. It underlined its willingness to cooperate with the OAU at the Africa–Europe Summit on 4 April 2000. In 2003, the EU made it clear that it wanted to work with the UN. This was made possible with the development of a European crisis management force.

In July 2003, when the new DRC government was created, Belgian, British and French foreign ministers, EU High Representative Javier Solana, and the EU Special Representative for the Great Lakes, Aldo Ajello, were present in the Great Lakes Region. Javier Solana met the President of the DRC, Joseph Kabila, and his Vice-Presidents, the UNSG Special Representative Ambassador William Swing, President Kagamé of Rwanda, and the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni. He then addressed the UN Security Council and made a report on Operation Artemis.

The UN Security Council authorized Artemis, the French-led EU intervention force of 2,000 troops to stop the conflict in Bunia, in the north-

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18 The Commission has decided to give EUR200 million (in the 9th FED from 2002 until 2007) (EU Commission document, 13 June 2003). This is not a big amount when compared to the budget for Burundi (EUR115 million). According to an interviewee (15 January 2004), the aim of the Commission is to review the amount of this aid in 2004. In effect, the EU governments agreed to pay for some of the Congolese debt.

19 Joint action, 11 November 1996.


21 The United Nations and the European Union cooperated in the following crisis management areas: in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the United Nations International Police Task Force handed over its responsibilities to the European Union Police Mission; in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the European Union Military Operation (Artemis) was deployed at the request of the Security Council; and the European Union wants to assist in the establishment of an Integrated Police Unit in Kinshasa to provide security to the transitional government and institutions (see the Joint Declaration on UN–EU Co-operation in Crisis Management, 24 September 2003).

22 Africa Confidential, 11 July 2003.

eastern Ituri Province. The Joint Action creating this operation entered into force on 5 June 2003 and expired on 1 September 2003.

France was responsible for assembling the Artemis force on behalf of the EU, and provided the majority of the approximately 1 000 troops. The troops involved were from 17 countries, 12 of them EU Member States. Belgium, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Canada, Austria, Germany, Brazil and South Africa took part in Artemis.

Artemis was qualified as a success, but one has to bear in mind that it had very limited aims in time and in geographical location. It restored security in the region and helped displaced persons return to their homes: following the operation, the population in Bunia increased from 40 000 to 100 000 people, markets were reopened and a reinforced MONUC (UN Mission in the DRC) contingent was deployed. However, the EU intervention only lasted three months and was limited to the town of Bunia: the intervention did not deal with violence outside this zone.

2. The Realpolitik Reasons for Artemis

Artemis was considered a special EU military intervention as it was the first time EU troops were deployed out of Europe and especially independently from NATO. In order to understand why the EU as a whole decided to send an autonomous mission to the DRC, one has to use a process tracing methodology and interviews. This section focuses mainly on the reasons why France, the United Kingdom and Germany agreed to an EU intervention, as they are the biggest military powers in the EU. This EU military intervention could be explained by maximal realism, as it was made on a lowest common denominator agreement whereby the EU states acted to prove the EU's

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25 The Artemis operation is one of the following ESDP operations: the European Union Police Mission (EUPM) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1 January 2003, ongoing); Concordia, the EU military operation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (31 March 2003–15 December 2003); Proxima, the EU Police Mission in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) (15 December 2003, ongoing); EUFOR – Althea, a military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (12 July 2004, ongoing); EUJUST THEMIS, an EU Rule of Law Mission to Georgia (16 July 2004, ongoing); EUPOL KINSHASA, a Police Mission in Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (9 December 2004); and EUJUST LEX on the European Union Integrated Rule of Law Mission for Iraq (7 March 2005). In the past, European forces, independently from the EU framework, had already been sent to Afghanistan, East Timor, Iraq and Africa.


capacity to act alone, and not first and foremost to answer to a humanitarian crisis.

Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General, was desperate for a major power to act in the DRC. The UN was willing to let the EU restore order in a town where MONUC was failing to act effectively. The situation in Bunia was extremely tense. On 6 May 2003, 7,000 Ugandans withdrew from Bunia. The Lenda attacked Hema people in and around Bunia. MONUC did not succeed in protecting the Hema and the civilians in Bunia. The Hema also retaliated to the Lema attack. The following table shows the different actors involved in the DRC conflict.

**Table 3. Parties involved in the war in eastern Congo**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda and Uganda</td>
<td>Had pulled out their troops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luanda, Angola, Uganda</td>
<td>Withdrew in August 2002 (save those patrolling the Ruwenzori Mountains: the Uganda People’s Defence Force chases remnants of the rebel Allied Democratic Forces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hema <em>versus</em> Lendu people</td>
<td>Have opposed one another since Independence in 1960 (disputes fuelled by the Ugandan occupiers seeking diamonds, gold and timber)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCD-National (Roger Lumbala) [Split from RCD-Goma (pro-Rwandan)], allied with MLC (Jean-Pierre Bemba, created in late 1998, linked to Uganda) <em>versus</em> RCD-ML (Mbusa Nyamwisi), allied to the Kinshasa government</td>
<td>Were at war. They were all supported by Uganda officially</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


On 10 May, Kofi Annan asked the Security Council to consider effective measures to prevent the loss of civilian lives. He then asked France – which had experience of intervention in the DRC and which spoke the language of the DRC – whether it would be willing to back up the MONUC mission in Bunia. France agreed to intervene militarily in the DRC: France needed to ‘repair’ its image of biased intervention in Rwanda. As the UN was *requesting*

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29. The RCD (Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie) depends on Rwanda militarily, and the MLC (Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo) is linked to Uganda.
30. UN News Service, 10 May 2003.
action, France, which ‘no longer wishes to intervene alone and wants a UN backing’, could answer positively.\(^{31}\) The ministère des Affaires étrangères and the Ministry of Defence started elaborating plans on an eventual French intervention.

French President Chirac realized this intervention would be the ideal case to prove the capacity of the EU to act autonomously from NATO. The decision by the Elysée to create an EU mission was strategic. According to interviewees: ‘France badly wanted a mission to show the EU was capable of acting alone, where NATO would not be involved.’\(^{32}\) Artemis is a direct consequence of the Concordia mission in FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), which was carried out with NATO. In March 2003, ‘the US and the UK requested to carry out the EU’s first military operation: Concordia was made to please the US.’\(^{33}\) Artemis was a policy game with immediate effect.

France made the most of the circumstances around the Artemis mission to convince other Member States of the necessity to create the operation: first, NATO was not focusing on Africa. Instead, NATO had troops in Afghanistan and was concerned with an eventual involvement in Iraq. Second, there were no military committee meetings organized during summer (it is only in the case of an emergency that the committee would need to meet). Third, the USA did not think the EU would act politically without NATO nor would be capable of acting successfully without NATO.

France also wanted to use the EU as an instrument of its own national foreign policy: in this case, its national foreign policy aim was to reinforce the EU’s independence vis-à-vis the USA in the defence field. It succeeded in showing that the EU was capable of acting with one voice – after the Iraq crisis – and without the USA. The French position in favour of an EU intervention was compatible with the realist balance of power theory: France wanted the EU to balance the USA. Waltz argued in 1993 that states would be ‘edging away’ from the USA in order to balance it. In a unipolar world, states should want to balance the hegemon’s unchecked power.\(^{34}\)

With Artemis, France also succeeded in demonstrating its own defence capabilities: as France was the lead nation and as its troops outnumbered all other national troops involved, it could be recognized politically as an effective military actor. An interviewee noted that ‘through the Artemis mission, France was present in the DRC before other international actors’.\(^{35}\) Artemis raised French prestige on the international scene. This article disagrees with Chafer who believed that France can no longer play a distinctive, ‘exceptional’ role

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31 Interviewee, 4 March 2005.
33 Interviewee, 3 March 2005.
in foreign policy because of European integration and closer cooperation with NATO.36

By sending an EU mission instead of a uniquely French intervention, France limited the risk of casualties for its troops. Also, Paul Kagame’s government in Rwanda was not on good terms with France. By having British troops also involved in Bunia, Rwanda, allied with the United Kingdom, was unlikely to intervene in Bunia against the French and British troops.

The decision by France to send an EU military mission to the DRC does not seem to have been based on the necessity to react to a humanitarian crisis of murders, mutilations and rapes. Instead, France primarily wished to prove the capacity of the EU to act without the USA. France was apparently not ready to intervene outside the Bunia zone, even if massacres were taking place there. The French position can be explained by maximal realism; France acted in a situation where the intervention was welcomed by the bulk of the populace and where it believed the probability of success would be high.

The United Kingdom position on Artemis is quite surprising from a realist point of view: the United Kingdom has neither historical nor economic links to the DRC. The United Kingdom apparently hesitated before intervening with the French at the EU level. As Blair had accepted the possibility for a European intervention without NATO assets at St Malo in 1998, and as Concordia, an EU mission with NATO involvement, had been carried out earlier in 2003, he accepted an EU mission autonomous from NATO in the DRC. The United Kingdom had to prove that it was still part of the project to create a European Union defence policy. Effectively, the United Kingdom only gave a political ‘caution’ as it did not send troops but engineers. The United Kingdom intervention was symbolic: the total of its military personnel amounted to 85. Of these, 70 were Royal Engineers who upgraded the airfield at Bunia.37 In addition, according to an interviewee, ‘in case the EU mission was successful, it would have been a shame not to have taken part in it’.38

The United Kingdom agreement to an EU intervention was also in conformity with Blair’s stance on intervention for humanitarian reasons. This stance was made clear in 1999 in Chicago. Blair stated on 22 April 1999 that there were clear conditions for intervention:

Are we sure of our case? Have we exhausted all diplomatic options? On the basis of a practical assessment of the situation, are there military options we can sensibly and prudently undertake? Are we prepared for the long term? [and last but not least – my emphasis] Do we have national interests involved?

38 Interviewee, 4 March 2005.
It was also made clear in practice in 1999 when European powers fought their first humanitarian war in Kosovo. Blair stated at the time that he was fighting not for territory but for values.  

By intervening symbolically in the DRC, the United Kingdom was not putting its troops at risk, it was implementing its discourse on the necessity of humanitarian intervention and was especially implementing its commitment made to the EU at St Malo. For the United Kingdom, Artemis was mainly a confirmation of its desire to promote and lead a European defence policy.

Germany was also reticent to intervene in the DRC. It eventually agreed to follow the British and French positions. Artemis seems to have been considered as a humanitarian intervention by Kofi Annan, but not by France, the United Kingdom or Germany. EU states considered the EU as an intermediary for their own national foreign policies. The role of the EU could be compared to what Bayart calls the ‘growing privatization of the relation Africa maintains with the rest of the globe’. He explains that Western powers, after the Somali fiasco of 1993 and the Rwandan tragedy of 1994, use private operators, such as commercial companies and non-governmental organizations, to conduct diplomacy, technical assistance, humanitarian aid, customs inspection and defence. They have not renounced their self-proclaimed right to influence African politics, but they act through private intermediaries. The EU is used as another intermediary to balance NATO and the USA, protect national troops and project their power in Africa.

The EU accomplished effectively the mission it had set itself. However, the reasons for this intervention show that the EU is unlikely to intervene in future crises first and foremost for humanitarian reasons. The following section develops this point further.

IV Implications of Artemis for Future EU Military Interventions and for EU Presence and Actoriness

1. Effective EU Policies in the DRC after Artemis: A Notable Improvement of Economic Aid

After the Artemis mission was carried out, the EU troops, as stated in their mandate, withdrew completely from the DRC. There was no question of sending more EU troops to the DRC and Artemis does not guarantee that intervention is likely to occur in the future. Other EU missions are highly unlikely under circumstances of higher security risks for European troops.

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When Bukavu (in South Kivu) was occupied by rebels in June 2004, a Belgian official wished to send European troops to the region, but all the other Member States refused to discuss the issue. In September 2004, according to Reuters, the EU Special Representative for the Great Lakes, Aldo Ajello, stated that ‘it would be desirable to have more troops able to communicate in French with inhabitants of the former Belgian colony. . . . We can provide support, in intelligence for example . . . above that, there are no further plans.’ French-speaking troops would thus seem to be needed in the DRC, but France is not providing them. The morality issue is thus, as assumed by maximal realists, only considered when there are very few casualty risks for European troops. European states do not systematically take morality into account and intervene in every crisis in the DRC or in Africa. European states do not act according to the description of national interest by Brown, an advocate of an international society, which could be ‘to right a wrong’ and intervene in a conflict in order to live in a world free of violations of human rights.

The EU focused its policy towards the DRC mainly in the economic and diplomatic field. Between 1999 and 2004, the European Commission allocated EUR180 million to the Democratic Republic of Congo. In December 2003, a Peace Facility (PF) for Africa was created. In 2004, it also supported, through its Rapid Reaction Mechanism, the launching of the Integrated Police Unit (Unité de Police Intégrée – UPI) in Kinshasa. It allocated a comprehensive EUR14 million EU support programme towards the establishment and functioning of the UPI, and the training of UPI officers/staff. EU Member States also spent much more development aid in the DRC in 2003 than they had previously. France, for example, spent very little in aid for the DRC before 2003. In 2002, it only allocated EUR13 million. In 2003

41 Reuters, 10 September 2004.
44 The Peace Facility (PF) for Africa was created by the European Commission. EUR250 million from the European Development Fund (EDF) has been mobilized for this PF. The PF should support African-led peacekeeping operations in Africa. It will be based on the principles of: (i) ownership reinforcing the capacity of the African people to deal with African conflicts; (ii) solidarity through financial contributions from all African countries; and (iii) development recognizing that without peace and stability there can be no development in Africa (EU Document, 30 October 2003).
however, it became a major donor to the DRC when it allocated USD704 million.47

In the diplomatic field, French and British officials continued to cooperate symbolically by organizing joint visits to African countries. The future British ambassador to Rwanda, for instance, currently is working within the ministère des Affaires étrangères. This would have been impossible ten years ago.48 France and the United Kingdom also seem to be cooperating in the development field. According to the Action plan on Franco-British development cooperation (18 November 2004), Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for International Development, and Xavier Darcos, Minister Delegate for Cooperation, Development and Francophonie, agreed that they would work together in support of country-owned poverty reduction strategies in the DRC. The EU’s CFSP policy also supported a police mission in Kinshasa. An ESDP Joint Action (EUPOL) provided for the monitoring of and advice for trained UPI officers.

2. The Future of EU Military Intervention and of EU Presence and Actorness: The Relevance of Maximal Realism

Since Artemis, there has been no EU military intervention in Africa. Blair had announced at the Labour Party conference in Brighton in October 2001 that:

I tell you if Rwanda happened again today as it did in 1993, when a million people were slaughtered in cold blood, we would have a moral duty to act there also. We were there in Sierra Leone when a murderous group of gangsters threatened its democratically elected Government and people.

Despite the unfolding crisis in Darfur, where the House of Commons estimates that up to 300,000 people have died since 2003, the EU has not even put on the agenda the possibility of EU intervention.49 The Member States, on an individual basis or via NATO, do commit troops abroad: the United Kingdom is committed in Iraq, the Balkans and Afghanistan (as part of NATO). France is involved in operations in Afghanistan, Ivory Coast, Haiti and Kosovo. Germany is committed in both Kosovo and Afghanistan.

This article does not argue that the EU is unlikely to send troops to Africa in the future. The EU is currently developing the Battle Group concept: this is giving the EU the possibility to carry out other missions similar to Artemis, namely operations which would be limited in time and which considered as low-scale interventions (2,000–3,000 troops). This article argues instead

that the EU is unlikely to act primarily for humanitarian reasons. States’ representatives can informally discuss a humanitarian crisis, but the conditions for EU intervention are explained by the realist theory.

In the past, France and the United Kingdom adopted two different policies towards Africa. The United Kingdom, on the one hand, completely withdrew from Africa and has rarely intervened militarily on the continent since the independence of its colonies. The United Kingdom only sent assistance troops to South Africa, Rhodesia and then Zimbabwe, and created a hospital during the Rwandan crisis in 1994. France, on the other hand, established defence treaties with many of its former colonies, and intervened in many conflicts to preserve its prestige, its influence at the UN (with the support of its former colonies) and its economic relations with its former colonies. Past British and French policies corresponded respectively to a minimal and to a maximal realist position.

Currently, an EU military intervention in Africa is only possible under the following conditions: first, when European representatives believe that there is a political gain for them. EU Member States’ representatives seem to think in terms of a ‘cost-benefit’ analysis: they intervene if it is in their interest to do so. Second, when the African state concerned is not in the zone of influence of either the United Kingdom or France. The intervention is likely to be small in scale and limited over time, as EU capabilities are limited. These conditions are those expected by maximal realism which assumes that actors intervene when it is in their interest to do so and when limited risks are at stake.

V Conclusion

EU military intervention in the DRC was successful as it enabled the UN to reinforce MONUC in Bunia. EU Member States agreed to act in order to show states outside the EU – such as the USA – that the EU as a whole was capable of intervening militarily. The EU did not act primarily in order to answer a humanitarian crisis. Kofi Annan is aware of this. He said in Stockholm in January 2004 at the first international genocide conference in over 50 years that ‘the world had the capability but “lacked the will” to prevent the mass slaughters of the 1990s’.

The Artemis mission shows that the EU is capable of acting militarily without NATO. However, this mission is not necessarily the first of a series of EU military interventions in Africa. The EU gained a military voice in the DRC, but this voice was limited in time and scope. As we have seen, there are conditions to meet in order to agree to EU intervention in a third country. EU Member States’ representatives think in terms of cost-benefit analysis,

as realism assumes. In addition, EU capabilities remain limited compared to those of NATO. When large operations are required, the EU cannot intervene. Also, the African Union seems to wish to act alone in Africa. It would rather have financial help from the EU than have both AU and EU military troops in an Africa state in crisis. EU Member States’ representatives insist on respecting the AU’s position.

By looking at the wider picture of general EU intervention in Africa, the EU is currently helping the DRC financially more than it did in 2003. It is also focusing on mediation and on training the DRC police force. There clearly is an EU presence in the DRC, but it is essentially based on its economic aid. The EU does not have the capacity to intervene in a large-scale operation, and EU decisions to intervene militarily do not seem to stem from a reaction to a crisis situation in Africa, but seem rather to originate in a will to promote the EU’s own image. If actorness is considered as being recognized as a capable power, the EU succeeded in its limited mission in Bunia. But if actorness is considered as projecting humanitarian values and reacting to a grave humanitarian crisis, then the EU failed in the DRC.