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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
NATIONAL

THE MINISTER

Defense Master Plan

December 03, 2003

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Foreword.

SMALLER **BUT BETTER EQUIPPED BELGIAN ARMED FORCES**

MORE FLEXIBLE, AND MORE QUICKLY PROJECTABLE

In less than fifteen years, the geopolitical situation has undergone two upheavals. The fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 and the terrorist attacks perpetrated on 11 September 2001 had a major impact on the analysis of the problem of peace and security, in Belgium, within the European Union and within the framework of the North Atlantic Alliance. The implosion of communism marked the end of the period of military occupation in Europe. The number of regional and local conflicts increased with the end of the Cold War. The globalization of terrorism has given a new dimension to the concept of security.

The geopolitical revolution observed over the past fifteen years has led to a geostrategic revolution. The transatlantic partnership remains the strategic priority for Belgium and for the European Union. But the Alliance Atlantique has adapted to the new international context. As part of the Summit of NATO organized in Prague in November 2002, the Alliance is committed to a new path: that of an enlarged Alliance, with more capabilities and exhibiting an increased capacity for engagement including – and perhaps even above all – outside the European continent and in partnership with NATO neighbours.

Within the European Union, the idea is growing that the Union must also have a credible defense policy, as an instrument of a foreign policy coherent. The European Defense Initiative was launched at the Summit of Saint Malo and was concretized within the framework of the Councils of Cologne and Helsinki. At April of this year, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Belgium have launched a series of concrete proposals aimed at providing European defense with a tangible content. Within the framework of the Intergovernmental Conference currently underway, a consensus is gradually emerging to integrate European defense in the Constitutional Treaty of the European Union and allow new forms cooperation through structured defense cooperation. THE development – in accordance with the cooperation agreements concluded between the European Union European Union and NATO – of a European capacity for strategic planning and operational and management of autonomous European operations is another

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example. It is a long process which will alternate ups and downs but whose end result is already known. Indeed, the European Union will only become a partner credible on the international scene only if it also has the capacity to own defense which is part of the strategic partnership between the Union European and NATO.

Belgium is and remains a loyal partner within the Atlantic Alliance. AT Prague, our country has made clear commitments in terms of capabilities and projectability of the Armed Forces. At the same time, we are the defenders of real European defence. Indeed, the Belgian Government is convinced that a European defense instrument combining power and efficiency is essential for the future of transatlantic relations and of an Atlantic Alliance renovated. The development of European defense will make appear within NATO a European pillar which, in turn, opens up the prospect of a transatlantic relationship truly balanced, for the first time since the end of the Second World War. Complementarity and balance are the essential principles of that evolution. NATO capabilities must be available and must be able be engaged for European defense and vice versa.

It is now up to Belgium to continue adapting its own armed forces to this new situation. During this legislature, the Belgian Government intends to take the measures required to ensure the establishment of a smaller Defence, more flexible, more mobile, better equipped and can be engaged more quickly. Indeed, the future of Belgian Defense lies in the participation in operations of peace within the framework of the United Nations, the European Union and NATO. That requires pronounced adaptations in terms of organization and operation of Defense. The "Defence Master Plan" which is presented is placed in the extension of the plan adopted in May 2000 and updated in January 2003, of which accentuates and accelerates the implementation. It takes up the lines of force of this deep transformation. A gradual decrease in the number of soldiers to reach the figure of 35,000 men, a coherent investment plan which gives priority to the modules of the "Earth" component, a new approach to training in the "Air" component, optimization of the capabilities of the "Marine" component and the medical component. In terms of the ability to

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transport (strategic transport, helicopter transport, in-flight refueling, etc.), the Belgium will seek synergies with other countries, primarily with the countries Bas and Luxembourg.

This defense reform should enable our country to participate in cooperation structure in terms of defense that is taking shape within the European Union. With other Member States, our country intends to go further in the development of capabilities which should allow the European Union to carry out its own demanding crisis and peace operations.

A new separate budget line will be inserted in the defense budget to the financing of the Belgian contribution to the development of military capabilities European Unions and participation in European operations.

This Master Plan should enable Defense to support the promotion of peace, stability and justice in Europe and beyond.

Brussels, 3 December 2003.

André FLAHAUT
Defense Minister

Guy VERHOFSTADT
Prime Minister

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Defense Master Plan

A balanced transformation to better redeploy

The new international context, the recent budgetary conclave and the government declaration, which on the one hand provides for a reduction in Defense personnel and on the other defines a new budgetary framework, have a decisive impact on the entire organization of Defense. The Master Plan is part of the extension and implementation of the 2000 strategic plan, its updating at the beginning of 2003 and taking into account the new elements of the government declaration.
It includes a series of proposals and aims to rectify imbalances that may arise in different areas and to keep Defense on the right track for the future.

The objective of the master plan is to make the necessary adaptations within the limits of the new budgetary framework, with a view to having a well-equipped army, able to commit its operational capacities in a sustainable manner without risk to the safety of its own troops. or those of its allies. This army must be able to use its resources effectively and efficiently and accomplish the tasks assigned to it on the international and national scene.

It is a realistic plan which takes into account aspects of European defense policy while respecting the transatlantic link and pays full attention to personnel policy.

Biggest Challenge: Staff

The staff is our main asset but also represents our greatest challenge.

State of play

A little less than ten years ago, the Belgian army became more professional by suspending compulsory conscription. This essential modification implied a complete questioning of the army, as much as regards its missions, its means, its structures, as with regard to the status of its personnel, etc. There are still some vestiges of this period which it is time to put an end to: this is the case of the law on military service – which is only suspended. This is also the case with the principle of being a soldier “for life”. The army, due to its operational specificity, needs mostly young personnel. However, the current statutes for career soldiers aim to maintain personnel from recruitment to retirement.
This system necessarily leads to a tubular age structure whereas it should be pyramidal with a broad base.

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Challenges

The government agreement establishes that Defense must reduce its workforce to 35,000 soldiers.

A reduction in personnel by limiting recruitment would inevitably lead Defense to an age structure in the form of an inverted pyramid. Reducing the arrival of young recruits automatically implies an overall aging of the staff and therefore a loss of operationality.

In addition, the return of the Belgian Forces to Germany and the Cold War caused an imbalance in the geographical distribution of personnel to the east of Belgium, with no connection to the real recruitment potential in the different regions.

The chosen strategy

By means of a constructive dialogue with staff representatives but also directly with staff (for example through investigations like what was done for the return of FBAs), Defense will work out solutions aimed at to match the qualitative and quantitative level of staff to operational needs.
These solutions will notably take the form of a mixed career status which will make it possible to offer older soldiers either the transition to civilian status or the possibility of following training with a view to outplacement in the private sector.
It will also be a question of easing the personnel policy in the sense of a decompartmentalization between employment groups, uniform colors, etc., and thus obtaining greater fluidity of transfers.

The lines of force for the future

Towards a workforce of 35,000 soldiers

In order to achieve the objective of 35,000 soldiers defined by the government agreement, it is necessary to act both on recruitment but above all on the possibilities of early departures through the use of "mobility pools", outplacement, …
In addition, these measures will be carried out in such a way that the gradual elimination of functions will take place primarily in administrative and support tasks.

Defense management, as a single structure comprising military personnel but also civilian personnel essential to the proper functioning of the company, implies a global approach to this personnel. It is no longer a question of fixing the number of soldiers eligible for military service each year in the quota law, but of defining the envelope of personnel, civilian and military, who work together to carry out Defense missions. This diversity of civilian and military personnel must be managed globally so that its richness produces fruits for all and in the interest of the company. This will therefore imply a revision of the current framework law. The evolution of the workforce can be found in the appendix.

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Targeted recruitment focused on young people

Recruitment will primarily aim to provide young and qualified personnel for operational functions and certain specialized functions that are currently lacking (computer specialists, medical personnel, etc.). To this end, Defense will continue its policy of an attractive image of military professions, but will also deepen and develop the concept of "well-being" of personnel in order to place them in a motivating context capable of limiting attrition among young people.

A career based on “reclassification functions” and “mobility ”

Defense will therefore develop initiatives to attract and motivate young men and women to build a first career in the army. At the end of this first professional experience, the soldier will have acquired knowledge and experience which, combined with support measures, will enable him to find another rewarding orientation for the rest of his professional life.

This will involve the organization of internal and external mobility as well as the development of a new training concept so that they can be promoted outside the department.

This mobility policy will necessarily have to take into account the social and family realities of the staff and will be facilitated in particular by the development of eco-mobility measures and flexible working hours.

A permanent policy of encouraging external mobility

Such a policy will in particular make it possible to offer certain advantages to soldiers who opt for external mobility, whether to the public or private sector.
In addition, Defense will support and supervise the personnel concerned

Mitigate imbalances in barracks and units

Solving completely the problem of deficits and surpluses in certain units is currently impossible. The search for a more balanced distribution of personnel throughout the territory as well as an optimization of the use of existing infrastructures can to some extent improve this situation.

Ongoing and constructive social dialogue

The social dialogue will continue and the elements of the previous sectoral agreement which could not be achieved will be. A new sectoral agreement for all Defense personnel will be developed and implemented. Through dialogue, it will materialize the lines of force of the Master Plan.

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Administrative complexity and regulations

A working group will be set up to simplify administrative complexity in all areas as quickly as possible. This group will also be responsible for reviewing all the regulations in order to bring them into line with the current situation.

Reserve

The reserve remains an essential link between Defense and civil society. The implementation of the new status has given new impetus to the reserve. Reservists will now be hired to supplement active duty units. In addition to this new status, Defense will develop a concept to attract specialists in specific tasks to this new Reserve.

Tailor-made training

The training is called, by the evolution of society in general and the realities of the military world in particular, to rethink its missions and its methods. In the future, it must meet three types of needs:

- The training must first be based on the execution of the primary function for which the student/pupil is intended;
- Furthermore, it must meet the needs resulting from the introduction of internal and external mobility;
- It must, in particular to fulfill its role of supporting external mobility, follow the evolution of teaching to be provided outside the department and get closer to it either by creating synergies or by updating its methods and programs.

So that training as a whole remains tenable in budgetary terms, Defense will articulate its training on: -

its own training capacity; - the possibility of sending staff to follow existing training courses at partners;

- participation in training courses developed by national collaborations and international;
- training provided in the private sector when necessary.

For the sake of greater continuity and coherence, the training institutions will be grouped under a single authority.
Finally, this transformation will involve rethinking the functioning of current arms schools, in particular by providing as much professional training as possible in the operational modules.

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Budget reality

The current framework

Given the current economic context, the Defense budget cannot count on any growth in the years to come. The current government is faced with significant needs in terms of employment and work, as well as in the social field (disabled people, pensions, health, etc.) and resources will be given priority to sectors in difficulty. We must therefore remain within a limited budgetary framework, which only announces - apart from annual inflation - a possible additional increase of a maximum of 0.5% from 2005.

We will have to find the space and the means necessary for the implementation of the governmental agreement and our strategic plan within the limits of this constraint. This agreement provides in particular for the use of greater resources to achieve certain personnel objectives, the gradual increase of investments in material and equipment for our military, the doubling of the credit to be provided for international peace operations and the inclusion of a specific budget line for financing the Belgian contribution to the construction of European military capabilities.

The savings to be made within our envelope, as well as their new allocation, must be defined. In this exercise, it is advisable to respect the logic which already underpinned the 2000 strategic plan for the modernization of the Armed Forces. We will seek them essentially by rationalizing the functioning of our department. The first product of these efforts will necessarily be distributed initially between efforts to quickly control the cost of personnel and those to improve the quality and quantity of equipment. Particular attention will be devoted to the acquisition of adequate equipment for the transformed land component.

The reduction in the workforce will be encouraged and accelerated by devoting the minimum resources necessary from 2004.

A budget framework and schedule are therefore established in this regard. They make it possible to plan short-term and longer-term means for:

- cover personnel needs (downsizing, improvement of the age structure, initiatives to consolidate and increase the attractiveness of the military career, etc.) achieve investment objectives, in accordance with
- national commitments of our Armed Forces, to the missions and tasks devolved to them, to the imperatives set by the government, etc. gradually and continuously move towards a European average in terms of equipment per soldier and towards a better balance
- between the

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three major segments of the budget (50% staff, 25% operation, 25% investment against 59 - 28 -13 currently).

It is planned to make substantial savings as soon as possible from the operating budget and small investments and to significantly and gradually increase this effort. Concrete measures and proposals will be formulated, in order to move from €5,700 per soldier per year currently to approximately €10,100 per year and per soldier in 2008. An average of €15,100 should be reached in 2015, which will bring us closer to the European average.

Saving to invest: concrete proposals

In addition to the reduction in staff numbers, the short-term compression of the operating budget and small investments and the transfer of the resources thus freed up to major investments open the way to a new budgetary balance. A progressive reduction, a reorientation of operational capacities as well as a new approach in the definition of the needs constitute the second instrument to achieve this balance.

Reduce operating costs

Reducing the operating budget and small investments is based on four pillars: • better management

and awareness of costs by everyone and at all levels, • reducing operating expenses, •

withdrawing equipment from use, • more efficient

use of military infrastructure.

Better management and awareness of costs by all players and at all levels.

Defense has set itself the objective of saving money by improving the management of the organisation, revising logistics concepts and stimulating cost awareness in the organisation.

Better management can be obtained by reducing the number of formalities, reducing the number of decision-making levels, continuing to decompartmentalize the organization and eliminating all decision-making levels without added value.

On the other hand, the management and maintenance of the equipment will be optimized and rationalized by:

• a revision of the concepts of use and maintenance, •

the execution of the maintenance of certain categories of material in force account and not subcontracted.

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Finally, prioritizing a more cost-conscious culture will engage everyone in the organization as well as other non-economic departments and customers in day-to-day management.

A suitable training

By reorienting its operational capabilities, adapting and increasing the effectiveness of training, Defense can make savings.
The objective of greater training efficiency will ultimately enable the transformed Land Component to achieve a 15% reduction in training program costs.

Moreover, the modernization of both fighter aircraft and flight simulation systems allows a gradual reduction in flight plans while guaranteeing operational efficiency and air safety.

By comparison with the current flight programs, the following adaptations will be applied: Flight hours on the

- F-16 will drop from 17,820 hours to 15,000 hours in 2004, then the decrease will continue gradually to 13,000 in 2010.
- Sea King flight hours will increase from 1545 to 1225.
- The Alpha Jet, Alouette II and A-109 flight plans will be gradually reduced while ensuring the continuity of training for student pilots in training and the retraining of experienced pilots on other types of aircraft.

As the operational fleet will be reduced from eleven to nine ships, the Marine Component will reduce the number of its sailing days from 900 to approximately 825 days of exercise per year for the operational fleet.

Withdrawal from employment

Given the reorientation of the operational capacities and therefore of the related structure, a certain number of systems become surplus. This retirement will have a favorable impact on maintenance and upkeep expenses.

In this context, surplus and possibly modernized equipment will be the subject of a systematic approach to new members of the EU and NATO in order to enable them too to gain access to a better level of interoperability.

In addition, the continuation of our activities during the initial transformation transition phase requires that we continue totally or partially the modernization processes initiated for certain equipment; this policy guarantees us more chances of success in the resale of these materials in a difficult international context and great competition .

Less infrastructure

Defense will save on infrastructure, on the one hand through the revision of service contracts and the distribution of maintenance and, on the other hand, by taking into account a more efficient and effective occupation of the infrastructure.

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Optimization of the occupation of the best current infrastructures will be studied to improve the regional distribution of personnel on the territory.

Transform to prepare for the future

A fundamental reorientation of Defense

One of the reasons for this review is the rise in power of the European Security and Defense Policy and the ongoing transformation process at NATO, as a result of the significant change in the geostrategic situation. The new forms of threat (terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, etc.) give rise to a new type of operation requiring the commitment of intermediate, light, flexible, extremely mobile and rapidly engageable armed forces. In this type of operation, the exchange of information and knowledge is a priority; it makes extremely thorough integration of all the systems in a single network essential. This transformation process is not limited to technological aspects; it also encompasses the development of new concepts, doctrines and structures.

Considering all these geopolitical factors, Defense is making the following strategic choices for the future:

- Be able to intervene in an international framework with all the capabilities to prevent, stem, control or stabilize a conflict (lower part of the conflict spectrum, such as peacekeeping operations, for example) • Be able to contribute in an international framework with well-defined capacities, and in a well-defined operational “niche”, in order to destabilize the adversary, annihilate or defeat him (upper part of the spectrum of conflicts, such as the Gulf War, for example).

Optimization of major investment needs

La Défense has developed a new vision for defining investment needs.

- The use of the concept of the minimum sufficient when defining the needs.
- The principle of “Commercial Off-The-Shelf” (COTS) purchasing is introduced. This means that Defense will focus, for its acquisitions, on existing equipment on the market. • La Défense will proceed, as much as possible, to joint purchases with our European partners, and will more particularly seek synergies at BENELUX level first, then at European level.

We should also mention here the creation of a European Armaments Agency, widely supported by a large number of member countries of the Union.

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The operational components.

The Earth Component

Transform to prepare for the future

In line with the aforementioned strategic choices, the Land Component opts for a medium capacity1 including a light capacity. Midrange units have effective combat potential and durability, are strategically mobile and quickly engageable. To this end, the Earth Component is moving to a modular, light and flexible structure.

Such an organization allows the rapid implementation of deployable modules according to configurations appropriate to the missions.
The midline capability is built around a range of wheeled light armored vehicles and wheeled multi-role protected vehicles. All the weapon systems implemented, as well as their engagement concepts, will have as their absolute priority effectiveness and efficiency, increased protection and the well-being of personnel. Within this framework, the development of a command, control, communications and information system integrating all the capabilities of the components of our armed forces is a priority objective.

The new structures

The Future Earth Component will consist of the following capabilities.

Command and control capability

• ONE General Staff, not deployable.

Projectable Median Abilities

• TWO command and control modules at the headquarters level of brigade, with an integrated medium and light capacity.
• NINE similar operational modules, namely FOUR medium combat modules, THREE medium/light combat modules and TWO medium combat modules with “90mm caliber fire” capability. All these modules are equipped with wheeled light armored vehicles and wheeled multirole protected vehicles. They are also equipped with new generation short and medium range anti-armour and anti-tank weapon systems.

• TWO intelligence acquisition modules, integrating all current ground reconnaissance units and mainly equipped with PANDUR vehicles. They are partially equipped with anti-armour weapon systems allowing their self-defense, and new generation sensors to fulfill their research mission.

• ONE special forces module with specific equipment. • TWO curved support fire modules, at medium range.

[1] Medium capacity: mobile and easily projectable combat units, supplemented with appropriate support units

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• A defense module against aircraft. • ONE
multirole helicopter module. • ONE
unmanned aircraft module for observation and intelligence
operational.
• TWO support engineering modules, equipped with vehicles identical to those of the other modules (improvement of routes, light demining, demining of areas, defense against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear agents, construction engineering).

Cross-component and territorial support capacities

These support capabilities, partially deployable, are equipped in such a way as to be able to ensure the territorial support of the entire Defence, but they possess, on the basis of the sufficient minimum, the specific equipment necessary for their protection when they project elements in support middle modules. Armor kits protect all vehicles such as jeeps and trucks that are involved.
These capabilities initially include: • ONE
explosive device removal and destruction module which will be progressively developed in Meerdael as well as in Poelkapelle and Zeebrugge.

• FIVE modules for implementing communication and information systems. • SIX
logistics modules responsible for supplies and maintenance. • ONE
movement control and military police module.

Cross-Component Training and Training Capabilities

These capabilities, which cannot be projected,
include: • FOUR training camp management modules in Belgium. • TWO
modules for managing combat centers, paratrooper type and
commando.

The main investments

The implementation of this new Earth Component structure involves the following major investments.

• Renewal and modernization of personal equipment. • The purchase
of means of communication and tactical information, usable
down to the individual level.
• Replacement of "4x4 jeep" type vehicles. • The
purchase of armor kits for the protection of vehicles such as jeeps and
trucks.
• The replacement of the current heavy tracked capacity by the purchase of wheeled light armored vehicles and wheeled multirole protected vehicles for all the modules (AIV1 and MPPV2).

[1] AIV: Armored Infantry Vehicle
[2] MPPV: Multi-Purpose Protected Vehicle

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• The purchase of new generation sensors to equip the intelligence acquisition modules, some of which are portable, but all of which can be used either from the ground or from reconnaissance vehicles. • The continuation of the quartering program for peace support operations, and the program for the modernization of our defense capabilities against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear agents. • The purchase of new generation short and medium range anti-armour and anti-tank weapon systems, some of which are portable, but all of which can be fired either from the ground or from combat vehicles.
• The purchase of some light and towed artillery pieces to complete the park existing.
• The purchase of defense systems against very short-range aircraft allowing either firing from the ground or from combat vehicles. • Participation in the possible development of a transport capacity multinational by helicopter.

Adaptation of the level of ambition

As soon as the new operational structures are put in place, the level of ambition of the Land Component will be adapted so as to be able to sustainably honor the following.

• At least one battalion-level light combat group, from the medium capacity, can notably intervene for evacuation operations of our nationals, with a limited duration and a reaction time of a few days. • A median autonomous brigade can be engaged without relief for a period of six months with a maximum reaction time of 60 days, within the framework of an EU rapid reaction force (RRF) or NATO (NRF). This period can be periodically reduced to a maximum of 20 days within the framework of a system of rotations within the rapid reaction forces. This brigade is assigned primarily to EUROCORPS. • A battalion-level medium combat group may be engaged for an extended period of time in peace support operations under a UN mandate.

• Certain intermediate capacities and various specific support and logistical capacities can be provided to the EUROCORPS multinational support brigade, or for engagement within the NATO Response Force (NRF).

• Eventually a headquarters at the median Brigade level can be deployed, with a minimum of support elements, for one year, within the framework of peace support operations; this commitment is however not compatible with the simultaneous commitment of the median autonomous brigade, but in any case makes it possible to provide an ad hoc contribution in staff personnel for the benefit of multinational headquarters.
• Elements of intelligence acquisition, curved fire, engineering, defense against aircraft, as well as A-109 multirole helicopters and unmanned aircraft of the B-HUNTER type can be deployed in direct support of all operations.

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• The possibility of acquiring transport helicopters will be examined, possibly through Belgian participation in a multinational programme.

The repercussions at the international level

• The adaptation of the level of ambition of the Land Component implies that the possible engagement in a major conflict such as the Gulf War can henceforth be conceived only with multinational support for all that concerns the heavy capacities which we would have need.
• Due to their transformation and reorientation into deployable units, all the modules of the Earth Component will henceforth be able to be engaged in a credible manner in the following operational
"niches" increased participation in the "Rapid Reaction Force" (RRF) of the EU or the NATO Response
Force (NRF). provision of our modernized CBRN capabilities (defense against chemical, bacteriological, radiological and nuclear agents). commitments of modules in the context of peace support operations, with a UN mandate, or in the fight
against terrorism. • The organization into modules unquestionably constitutes the expected adaptation of our defenses in the new international context. This is in fact the translation in the texts, and in the organization, of what we have been doing for several years in our operations (ex-Yugoslavia, Congo-Ituri, Afghanistan, etc.). In addition, internally, this organization based on the same types of vehicles will make it possible to achieve substantial operating savings and will subsequently allow groupings according to overall national and international developments.

The Air Component

Transform to prepare for the future.

The Air Component provides two capabilities. The tactical air capability, based on the F 16 combat aircraft, continues to be modernized but the fleet will gradually increase from the current 90 aircraft to 60 in 2015. Due to the concern for safety and the quality of training, the standard current 165 flight hours per pilot per year remains strictly applied. To meet an increase in our transport capacities, combat pilots will be converted to air transport.

With regard to air transport capacity, the 11 C-130 transport aircraft, protected against attacks by missiles from the ground, are maintained until their replacement around 2018 by 7 A400 M aircraft (offering a total of more large carrying capacity). The two A 310 passenger aircraft will be replaced at the end of their service life. The other, smaller, passenger-carrying aircraft meet future needs.

In
addition, • Pilot training, still currently organized at the national level, will
subject of multinational cooperation.

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- In the field of air traffic control, in accordance with the government statement, consultation will quickly take place between Defense and Belgocontrol in order to achieve a maximum degree of collaboration which can go as far as the integration of areas of activity covering operational aspects, techniques and training. The activities of the CRC1 in Glons will be maintained.

- The “Search and Rescue” (SAR) task will continue to be carried out in the future from the coast. Consultation will take place in order to find synergies with other departments.

The new structures

- TWO Tactical Wings with a total of 72 F-16s from 2004 (and a proportional reduction to 60 F-16s in 2015) •
ONE reinforced transport wing with 11 C-130s, 2 A-310s and lighter liaison aircraft . • A Search
and Rescue (SAR) squadron with 4 helicopters from
from 2004.
- UN CRC (Control and Reporting Center)
- Greater synergy in the field of air traffic control between ATCC2 and CANAC3 (Air Traffic Control Center – Computer Assisted National Air Traffic Control Center)

Adaptation of the level of ambition

Tactical Air Capability

- TEN F-16s for operations longer than one year as part of the EU rapid reaction force.

- THIRTY F-16s as part of the NATO High Readiness Force (HRF), possibly spread over two theaters of operations.

- SIX F-16s as part of the NATO Response Force (NRF).

Note: Engagement within the EU framework cannot be simultaneous with that planned for the NATO HRF. Participation in the NRF is compatible with the other two commitments.

Airlift capabilities.

- EIGHT C-130 and TWO A-310 for operations within the framework of the EU or NATO.

[1] CRC: Control and Reporting Center
[2] ATCC: Air Traffic Control Center 3
CANAC: Computer Assisted National Air traffic control Center

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Search and Rescue (SAR) Capabilities

• TWO helicopters permanently available for rescue operations in support of the Nation with a reaction time of 15 minutes and 1 hour respectively.

The main investments

• The acquisition of self-protection for the C-130s, • The continuation of the modernization of the F-16.
• Replacement of Search&Rescue helicopters.

The repercussions at the international level

The contribution in terms of tactical air capability for operations within the framework of the EU rapid reaction forces and the NATO High Readiness Forces (HRF) is reduced respectively from 12 to 10 and from 36 to 30 F 16 combat aircraft.

The Marine Component

Transform to prepare for the future

The component provides three operational capabilities.

Escort capability

It will be improved either by the takeover of two more recent multifunctional "M" frigates which are put up for sale by the Netherlands, or by the modernization under this legislature of the weapon systems on 2 of the existing frigates.

The takeover of 2 more recent "M" frigates would make it possible to further deepen the collaboration within ABNL (Admiral BENELUX).

mine countermeasures capability

This capability, and more specifically minehunting, continues to be upgraded and complemented by a minehunting capability in shallow waters, in collaboration with the Netherlands. The command and logistic support ship will also be modernized. Naval liaison helicopters will be replaced. The mine data center and mine warfare school in Oostende will be adapted to the requirements of modern minehunting.

Strategic Sealift Capability

In this area, synergies will be sought with our partners and allies. Where appropriate, transportation will be provided through commercial charter contracts.

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In addition, one or more auxiliary building(s) could be made available as part of the security policy in the North Sea.

The main investments

• The acquisition of TWO recent multifunctional frigates from the Netherlands or the modernization of the weapon systems on 2 of the existing frigates. • Modernization of the command and logistic support vessel GODETIA
• Replacement of naval liaison helicopters.

Adaptation of the level of ambition

Escort capacity

A frigate, of the model currently in inventory, available for a period of at least nine months per year for operations within the framework of the EU or NATO.

Mine Counter Capability

• FIVE minehunters and the command and logistic support ship for operations of limited duration as part of a mine countermeasures group.

• TWO minehunters for an indefinite period as part of a mine countermeasures group.

Ability to help the Nation

• ONE Ready Duty Ship available 24 hours a day and able to sail within the hour.

Note: The engagement of the frigate is compatible with the participation in a mine countermeasures group.

The repercussions at the international level

The replacement of the three existing frigates by two more recent multifunctional frigates makes it possible to maintain the availability of a frigate within the framework of EU or NATO operations throughout the year and to meet the operational requirements of a commitment within the framework of the NRF.

In the event that the weapon systems are modernized on 2 of the existing frigates, ONE frigate of the model currently in inventory may be made available for at least 9 months per year for EU or NATO.

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The Medical Component.

Transform to prepare for the future

The modular approach to operational engagement makes it possible to scale medical support to the operational capabilities involved, with priority attention being given to first-line care. The medical component must therefore have equipment equivalent to that of the operational components.
It remains organized as follows:

- A base hospital center which brings together highly specialized services: the burns center, with hospitalization and consultation, the hyperbaric/hypobaric center, the SMUR (Emergency Medical Service), with dispatching medical, a traumatology and orthopedics department with hospitalization and consultation as well as the mental health center with the crisis psychology section.

- FOUR operational medical modules with their antennas. • THREE medical intervention modules. • A technical intervention medical module.

The main investments

- Acquisition of a new hypobaric chamber for the military hospital.

Adaptation of the level of ambition

- The first priority remains to ensure first-line care for the benefit of units in operations.

The repercussions at the international level

- The commitments of the Medical Component remain maintained.

Joint support capabilities, an investment for the future

Intelligence capability and military security

Defense chooses to maintain and improve its autonomous intelligence capability by investing in research resources, analysis capability and secure communication resources. To this end, it will participate in particular in European research, communication and earth observation programs (including HELIOS II). In addition, a concept of acquisition and integrated exploitation of strategic and operational military intelligence will be developed and taught in an appropriate training module, which will also train in military security.

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Command, communication and information capability

For better protection and faster reaction to module attacks, the way in which information is disseminated, shared and processed must be improved. Defense will invest in the integration of the various command systems, sensors and platforms as well as in digitalization down to the lowest level of execution. Both the different systems and the means to connect them, such as radios and networks, will thus be adapted in order to meet the imperatives of interconnectivity and interoperability of weapon and command systems at national and international level.

CRBN Defense Capabilities

Defense will invest in the protection of its troops for defense against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CRBN) agents. Here too, cooperation with other EU or NATO countries is possible.

Logistic capacities

Effective and efficient logistical support of capacities is essential. The principles of modern logistics, such as modularity allowing us to support our levels of ambition on the basis of a sufficient minimum and with reduced levels of support, designed on an intercomponent territorial basis, will be decisive for the development of structures, concepts and defense logistics systems.

In this same context, optimized inventory management will be systematically sought, on the basis of a sufficient minimum. This implies accountability of managers at all levels.

Coordination of strategic transport

A transport coordination body will be created, which will plan the use of all potential means (aircraft, helicopters, MP escort, bus, military road transport, visa and travel, commercial means such as trains and ships, etc.) in order to optimize their usage.

The ability to intervene for the benefit of disaster-stricken populations, both national and international, and in the fight against terrorism

Within the framework of B-FAST (Belgian First Aid and Support Team) and soon EU FAST, various capacities will continue to be able to intervene permanently for aid to civil society in the event of disasters and natural disasters, as well as for the collaboration with the police forces for the fight against terrorism.

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Final considerations

Defense is resolutely moving towards international cooperation in the fields of security and defense and in this way contributes to the development of a European defense capability within the framework of the strategic partnership between the European Union and NATO. This is done, among other things, through the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC1), the European Action Plan for the Development of Capabilities (PAEC2) and the initiatives taken on the occasion of the Brussels Summit of 29 April 2003. Furthermore, Defense has undertaken to make a series of operational capabilities available to the EU and NATO.

The PAEC process within the European Union is carried out in maximum synergy with PCC progress within NATO. Defense actively participates in eliminating the EU's capability gaps. The initiatives launched within the framework of the Brussels Summit of 29 April 2003 and which contribute to the development of a European defense capability will receive priority.
La Défense is not immune to the influence of a constantly changing society and the need for permanent adaptation to an evolving and uncertain environment. Defense is an integral part of this society, which implies a certain degree of flexibility within its organization as well as in the management of its personnel.

The challenge we still face today stems primarily from the inadequacy of the personnel structure of our Armed Forces.
Since the suspension of compulsory military service, the imbalance of this structure as well as repeated budgetary restrictions have led to successive restructurings.

The 2003 Defense Master Plan aims to translate the strategic plan for the modernization of the Belgian Army (May 2000) and its optimization (February 2003) into long-term future prospects.

Among the main factors for the success of this Master Plan, particular mention should be made of the political will to develop an effective defense tool and the absolute necessity of guaranteed long-term budgetary stability.

Similarly, in terms of personnel, the importance of a modification of the statutes adapted to a professional army, allowing effective recruitment and offering real possibilities of release and mobility, both internal and external, will be retained.

In addition, we will insist on the imperative need to make the investments essential to the reorientation of the operational capabilities of Defence.

Finally, to free up the necessary means for these investments, it is also important to make substantial savings in the field of operation and small investments within Defence.

[1] Prague Capabilities Commitment/Engagement Capacitaire de Prague.
[2] European Capabilities Action Plan

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Thus, our Armed Forces, smaller, better equipped, available and deployable, will be able to meet as jointly as possible the geostrategic challenges of tomorrow within the limits of the level of ambition defined for Defence. Indeed, the modernization of equipment, the increase in the quality of personnel training and the improvement of technical and logistical support will allow a reduction in the number of weapon systems, while guaranteeing the safety of personnel and operational efficiency.

We must now tackle the problem head-on and act together in order to achieve this transformation. The authorities, both political and military, undertake to make every effort to achieve the level of ambition they have set themselves.