

A force for good? The European Union and human security in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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Human security is part of the policy identities of both the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU). In the EU, human security is not an explicit policy, but can be seen as embedded in initiatives such as conflict prevention and crisis management. The EU's military mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo (EUFOR RDC) in 2006 has been the most striking example so far of the EU using human security as a methodology for its external engagement, and this experience is expected to establish a framework for future military and civilian assistance to Africa.

This paper elaborates a European concept of human security based on five operating principles and evaluates EUFOR RDC against these principles to show how, in all but name, the DRC mission was a human security initiative. It proposes that this kind of human security approach is not only significant for the development of the EU as an international security actor, but could signal an important shift in the relationship between the EU and Africa, changing the terms of discourse between the two continents.

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Introduction

On 1 December 2006, convoys of trucks began to roll out of Ndolo airbase in Kinshasa, heading for the port of Boma on the Congo River, as the EU's first military mission in Africa packed its bags and headed home. EUFOR RDC, comprising 19 nations and under a joint Franco-German command, spent four months in Kinshasa with a mandate to support the United Nations mission (Monuc) in securing the country's first democratic elections in 46 years.

The mission broke new ground by engaging the EU as a hard security actor, with military force at its disposal, in an African country with no prior or accompanying NATO involvement. Germany, which provided the operational commander and headquarters for the mission and over 700 troops, had been particularly nervous about involving its military in African security, and struggled to answer the fundamental question of what it was doing in DRC in the first place. EUFOR RDC thus represented a significant milestone in the evolution of the EU's global security capabilities and ambitions, and its successful completion may well pave the way for the EU to contemplate future engagements in Africa, possibly in Darfur (Rettmann 2007).

The mission was also groundbreaking in the way it fulfilled its mandate, and the methods it deployed, with a combination of robust military force and carefully planned initiatives to make the intervention of European troops acceptable to the local population. This was a peacebuilding operation that relied on a distinctive mix of military and quasi-civilian methods and that reflected the evolution of a distinctive approach to EU external missions, both military and civilian, that has been taking place in the last three years.

The argument presented in this paper is that the EU is moving towards a human security approach, particularly for those interventions carried out under the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) that are mandated by the intergovernmental European Council. Although this policy is not explicitly labelled human security, the focus of ESDP interventions is on a form of crisis management that takes seriously the wellbeing of individuals and their communities. Local populations are treated as if they were citizens, not aliens, and the 'means' as well as the goals of interventions are key considerations in deployment. The experience of EUFOR RDC suggests that this approach can be successful, and may provide an appropriate framework for further EU engagement in Africa, and useful common ground for working with other actors such as the AU or the UN.

The argument is developed in three sections. First, I look at what human security means in the EU context to provide a basis for my claim that the Congo mission displayed important aspects of a human security approach, and to situate it within alternative definitions of human security, including that adopted by the AU. The second section

is a summary of a case study of the EUFOR mission in the context of the overall EU engagement in the DRC, including an evaluation of its human security characteristics. Finally I suggest that the human security approach is part of a shift in EU discourse on external intervention and assistance to crisis zones, which has implications for the security relationship between the EU and Africa, beginning with a change in the terms of political dialogue between them.

The European Union and human security

In 2004, the Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities, convened by Javier Solana, the EU high representative, published the Barcelona Report proposing a human security doctrine for Europe. It defined human security as the security of individuals and communities, and used examples of intolerable threats to human security, ranging from genocide and slavery to massive violations of the right to food, health and housing. The doctrine consisted of seven principles, later reduced to five, which stated that EU intervention should be based on the primacy of human rights, legitimate political authority, a bottom-up approach, effective multilateralism and a regional focus. The report concluded: 'A human security approach for the European Union means that it should contribute to the protection of every individual human being and not focus only on the defence of the Union's borders, as was the security approach of nation-states' (*A human security doctrine for Europe* 2004).

The Barcelona Report followed the elaboration, nine months earlier, of the European Security Strategy (ESS), in which Solana had set out the EU's ambition to be a 'force for good' in the world, capable of responding to a range of threats, including distant threats made potent by globalisation (*A secure Europe in a better world* 2003). The ESS envisaged a distinctive role for the EU in which it provided a comprehensive package of security comprising the whole range of EU external policies under a 'positive objective of effective governance at both the global and the regional level, that is promoting every individual's access to ... basic public goods'. As Biscop (2005) notes, the ESS can and should be a global agenda for positive power.

As well as a declaratory commitment to comprehensive security, the EU has undertaken, since 2003, a steady build-up of capabilities within the ESDP, designed to implement this vision. Two headline goals have established deadlines for EU member states to contribute military and civilian resources for the EU to undertake both rapid reaction interventions and longer-term missions to deal with conflict and post-conflict situations, including 'out of area' engagements beyond Europe. A joint civilian-military planning cell for operations has been established in Brussels, and greater attention has been paid to improving coherence between the European Council's crisis management initiatives and the commission's so-called flanking measures that provide long-term development

and reconstruction assistance. At the same time, human rights and gender issues have been mainstreamed into the planning and operation of external policies.

Yet, on paper at least, this still does not amount to a fully-fledged human security policy by the EU. The recommendations of the Barcelona Report remain largely unimplemented, owing to the failure of the EU Constitutional Treaty, which would have provided important institutional support for a human security agenda, via an EU foreign minister and a new external action service. Key member states such as the UK and Germany have argued that a human security policy may be too utopian a step for the EU to embrace wholeheartedly.¹ However, in 2006, the Finnish presidency of the EU reconvened the Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities with a request that it should examine ways of taking forward a human security agenda in the EU. At the same time, the commissioner for external relations, Benita Ferrero-Waldner (2006), has stated her belief in a human security approach and recently the German presidency of the EU has indicated that it sees merit in such a policy, although it remains sceptical of some of the principles proposed in the Barcelona Report (Eberle 2007).

In an attempt to elaborate on the concept of human security in a European context, Mary Kaldor, author of the report and convenor of the study group, has proposed a definition of human security that situates it at the sharp end of individuals' vulnerability to both physical and material threats: fear and want. The Human Security Study Group has also attempted to show through an analysis of existing EU security policies that 'human security', by its essence, seems to be something 'European', although it draws on the debates generated by other terms used more broadly in the current global discourse such as 'responsibility to protect', 'effective multilateralism' and 'human development' (Kaldor et al 2007).

On the definitional issue, rather than following a distinction between human security as either a development issue – in the sense used by the UN since 1994 – or a hard security issue of protection against violence, as implemented by the Canadian government, Kaldor suggests that human security is about both aspects of individual wellbeing, that these aspects are interrelated, and both are threatened by moments of crisis (Kaldor et al 2007).

Security as defence against physical violence is part of a continuum which includes development to improve living standards. Human security re-imagines the problem of insecurity as human need at moments of extreme vulnerability, not only in wars, but in natural and technological disasters as well as famines, tsunamis and hurricanes. It can be treated as the crisis end of terms such as 'human rights' and 'human development'. It is not just about the absence of violence, but about feeling safe on the streets or being able to influence political decision making. Emblematic features of human (in)security are displaced persons and refugees or the millions who depend on humanitarian assistance rather than develop independent livelihoods. In contemporary wars, most people die not on the battlefield, but because of violence deliberately targeted against civilians, or

because of the indirect effects of war as a result of lack of access to healthcare, the spread of disease, hunger and homelessness.

An EU human security policy is about tackling such problems and safeguarding the rights of individuals to life in decent conditions and without threats to their personal safety. Security policies and external intervention have to address the distorted economic conditions produced by war, the demobilisation of militias that threaten civilian communities, the protection of human rights and the restoration of a rule of law as crucial components in breaking chronic cycles of conflict.

As an analytical tool, the value of a human security policy is that it offers a perspective on crisis and the complex linkages between poverty and material development and pernicious, chronic states of instability and violent conflict. It can provide a means of recognising that traditional boundaries between different categories of intervention – such as civilian, military and humanitarian aid – or between different phases of action – such as prevention or reconstruction – have become blurred and have to be redrawn in an era of globalisation because they are defined largely in terms of a nation-state.

At the same time, a European human security doctrine implies a normative emphasis, intended to focus actors' attention on the means and methods by which external intervention seeks to achieve these goals. It is about combining military force and civilian measures in such a way that it produces not merely short-term stabilisation, but the foundations of sustainable peace.

The key characteristic of the EU approach as set out in the Barcelona doctrine is human security as a methodology for external action, via a set of five principles that apply to 'how' and 'why', ends and means (A human security doctrine for Europe 2004). These principles, which are the primacy of human rights, legitimate political authority, a bottom-up approach, effective multilateralism and a regional focus, provide a framework that makes it possible for civilians and military to implement a human security approach. At tactical level they constitute a checklist for action in the field, as well as a basis of accountability for public audiences to evaluate what is done in interventionist operations. The principles not only clearly define a human security approach as a normative policy, but, importantly for practitioners, they create accessible steps by which such an approach can be realised. While the end state of human security remains vague and elusive for the realpolitikers of nation-states who regard it as utopian, a methodology that encompasses a focus on human wellbeing with ideas about combining the diverse forces of intervention – economic, military, cultural, social and political – offers a potentially more promising avenue for promoting human security policies.

The primacy of human rights means that the main goal for the military is protecting civilians rather than defeating an adversary. The capture or defeat of insurgents has to

be seen as a means to protecting civilians, rather than a goal that may lead to collateral damage among the civilian population.

The establishment of legitimate political authority means a focus on local government or regional or international political arrangements such as protectorates or transitional administrations rather than dealing only with a – possibly defunct – national state. It emphasises measures such as justice and security sector reform, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of armed forces and public service reform. ‘Effective multilateralism’ means more than simply ‘acting with a group of states’, and involves task sharing rather than duplication or rivalry with regional organisations such as the AU, SADC and Ecowas (Economic Community Of West African States) in Africa, and a commitment to working through international organisations to solving problems via rule-making and cooperation.

The bottom-up principle seems obvious, but is frequently ignored in practice. Human security is about empowering vulnerable communities, even in conditions of conflict and crisis, rather than coercing or regulating them to produce peace. It requires real consultation and a willingness to let local civil society take responsibility for reconstruction. The regional focus principle stresses the need to avoid focusing only on particular countries when dealing with crises, but to deal with the reality that insecurity spills over borders in the form of refugees, transnational criminal networks, trade in illegal commodities and spread by the power of diasporas, a globalised media and ideologies.

While two other recommendations of the Barcelona Report – for a human security response force and a legal framework governing external action – remain on the backburner after the failure of the EU’s efforts at reform via a constitutional treaty, the principles retain a strong flavour of pragmatism. They attempt to bridge the perceived divide between human security as a broad security strategy for development and a narrow focus on violent threats, in other words the distinct positions on human security adopted by leading proponents such as Japan and Canada. They are closer to the goals set out by the AU Commission in its 2004–2007 strategic plan, which regards human security as part of peace and governance initiatives (Commission of the African Union 2004–7). Human development is not an either/or choice between physical and material security, it encompasses both. Moreover, an EU human security approach refutes two core dilemmas suggested by Owen and Liotta: that it involves a choice between policies that are either narrow and operable or broad and ideal; and that as a systemic practice of ethics it may need to rely on coercive force to be implemented. On the first dilemma, the point about the principles is that they are a framework for pragmatic action, as well as statements of values, and that ‘doing’ human security requires a shift in the focus of EU external action, and better coherence between individual initiatives rather than a wholesale reinvention of policy. In this sense, human security is both broad and operable.

On the second dilemma, the EU as a collective actor now has the capabilities to coerce, although there have been few examples to date of it deploying hard power in favour of the so-called soft goals of human development. Clearly the build-up of military resources for autonomous missions is designed to do just that, and was spelled out in the ESS of 2003. The EUFOR RDC mission was the clearest case to date of how the EU can use its mix of external instruments – from military force to civilian assistance – to pursue human security goals.

While there is still a gap between what the EU could do to address crisis in human security terms and what its current policy mix produces, much of a human security approach is already implicit in the EU's initiatives on conflict prevention, human rights, and work with civil society. ESDP operations include an emphasis on civil-military cooperation and its commitment to 'effective multilateralism', as stated in the ESS, and highlighted as a principle of a human security doctrine in the Barcelona Report, has been demonstrated in numerous engagements in the last three years, most recently in the DRC in providing military and civilian forms of support alongside the UN mission (Monuc), and bilateral state actors in the transition.

The issue for the EU is that it hesitates to label its actions as human security, so there is a disjuncture between calling and doing human security. This is more than just semantics or taxonomy. Policy terms are necessary to help define the ideas, values, interests and goals of external relations for those applying them, such as the EU or the AU, and for those on the receiving end of such policies. In the EU, a proliferation of different, and sometimes competing policy descriptors such as crisis management, conflict prevention, civil-military cooperation and rapid response underline the incoherence and fragmentation of its external action. In this case, an explicit commitment to a human security approach could serve as an effective organising frame and mindmap, providing a unifying narrative for diverse initiatives. Consciously using the term 'human security' can help to take what has already been done a stage further.

Forceful for whose good? The EUFOR mission in the DRC

The decision to send over 2 000 European troops to support Monuc and provide stabilisation during the two rounds of presidential elections in 2006 marked a turning point in the EU's global ambitions. EUFOR RDC was the first autonomous mission to Africa. For Germany, which supplied operational command and the largest single contingent of troops, it was a controversial deployment that gave rise to nightmare scenarios of ill-informed and prepared troops caught up in a 'domestic' African conflict that had little to do with European interests (for example Amann 2006). Yet despite these misgivings, the mission has been deemed a success² and has probably paved the

way for further EU military expeditions, including to crisis regions in Africa (Solana 2007). EUFOR RDC represents an important advance, not only in what it achieved in terms of stabilisation and conflict prevention, but also in the way that it operated. For in some respects, in its original design and implementation, EUFOR was human security in action, breaking new ground in the way that a military mission could be used to promote the long-term wellbeing of individuals with no ambition to control or defend territory, and to treat them as if they were citizens rather than an alien population.

Initial public perceptions of EUFOR RDC in Africa were negative. The media ridiculed it for having the majority of its troops based in Gabon, hundreds of kilometres from any potential conflict.³ To observers, it looked like another example of European tokenism – a paper tiger to vaunt the EU's pretensions as a serious security actor.

Its mandate limited it to operating in Kinshasa, and when called upon by Monuc for back-up. It constituted a resource of last resort behind the Congolese police and army, and Monuc. Moreover, its licence was to protect elites, not ordinary Congolese, in particular foreign VIPs associated with the transitional institutions, a point not lost on the local population.⁴ A serious handicap was the legal duration of the mission: it was deliberately kept short to coincide with the electoral timetable, but delays in polling meant that EUFOR RDC was programmed to operate only until immediately after the second round of results and then withdraw from 1 December.

While technically this fulfilled the EU's aim of providing a stable environment for the electoral process, it missed the point about supporting a peace process that would alleviate the suffering of the civilian population (*ESDP newsletter* 2006:15). European commanders had to deal with the public relations effect of appearing to 'cut and run' as soon as the elections were over and with the new president not even installed officially. More seriously, the mission had to leave when tensions between the camps of the victorious and losing presidential candidates were still high in the capital. For around a week there was a serious possibility of violence in Kinshasa between militia groups, EUFOR RDC not being authorised to use any kind of force other than limited defence of its own troops. It risked being a bystander to conflict or human rights abuses because its mandate had expired. On the other hand, the mission's limited duration was probably a benefit. In terms of the Barcelona doctrine, the deployment of European troops succeeded in using military force to achieve a short-term stabilisation and create a space in which 'normal' peaceable politics could be conducted.

The mission's main operational success stems from the way it handled the most serious outbreak of violence during the election. On 20 August, after an inconclusive first round of voting in the presidential election, militias loyal to Joseph Kabila launched an attack on the headquarters of Jean-Pierre Bemba, the runner-up in the first round. Two days of street battles followed between troops loyal to the two candidates. By coincidence, 14

ambassadors, including the head of Monuc, Ambassador Bill Swing, were in Bemba's headquarters during an attack that left the diplomats besieged. Unable to contain the situation by itself or with the Congolese police and army, Monuc called on EUFOR RDC for back-up to evacuate the ambassadors. Meanwhile, dozens of civilians died in the street fighting.

The impact of the August events was to shift Congolese perceptions of the European force. From being part of a 'Western' attempt to promote the locally unpopular Kabila, the European troops gained a reputation as a neutral power and a force dissuasive. They were seen to behave differently from Monuc because they patrolled the streets up to four times a day – often on foot and without full battledress, in contrast to the UN troops who went out in tanks. At the same time they were seen as having credible force because troops carried a range of weapons from rubber sticks to guns; they were known to possess infra-red technology that allowed them to operate effectively after dark; and sparing use of Mirage jets to fly over Kinshasa enhanced their image. Crucially, too, they spoke French. Their action in defending Bemba against an attack that was widely regarded as having been launched by Kabila's personal guard helped persuade the Congolese that they were genuine about securing a peaceful and fair electoral process.

The politically sensitive nature of the mission contributed to an acute awareness at every stage from planning through to decisions in the heat of the moment as to what level of force was appropriate, of how the Congolese would react, and the need for the European force to be seen as a neutral supporting force rather than a partisan enforcement tool.

When assessed against the five principles of a European human security doctrine, EUFOR RDC succeeded in establishing what could be called a human security approach. A human rights agenda was built into the mission from the earliest stages of planning with the appointment of a specific human rights advisor to the mission; a gender concept was developed, along with a reporting system to monitor human rights issues; training was carried out in human rights and gender issues; and street patrols took with them a human rights monitor and often medical assistance for the local population.

For the first time in EU operations, a common 'soldier's card' was produced for troops with clear instructions on the use of force, gender issues such as sexual abuse and dealing with child soldiers. The cards were distributed during operational training in Gabon and in Kinshasa. The rules were intended as a framework for the actions and behaviour of EUFOR RDC troops, and to establish a 'European' standard in place of the different operating procedures of member states. Soldiers were warned that they were 'personally responsible' for respecting and promoting human rights, and told that 'protection of civilians under imminent threat of physical violence ... is part of your mandate'. In practice, this was a considerable deviation from the strict legal terms of the mission.

On paper, the principle of clear political authority was respected through UN Security Council Resolution (1671), which authorised EUFOR RDC to support Monuc for the duration of the elections. In practice, officers involved in the mission felt that its responsibilities were not clear, particularly in the light of the protocol that EUFOR could only intervene as a fourth line of 'stabilisation' after the Congolese (police and army) and then Monuc. This led to confusion in the second outbreak of violence, which occurred in November after supporters of the losing presidential candidate, Jean-Pierre Bemba, attacked and set fire to the Supreme Courthouse. The Congolese police on duty ran away from the scene and Monuc failed to prevent the arson, but EUFOR RDC was not involved, because the call for assistance never came. At the very least, it left the Congolese puzzled, provoking a number of negative articles in the local press, and the frustrating the Europeans because they were not used. One solution would have been to establish through the EUFOR mandate a discrete area of operation for EUFOR, such as the whole of Kinshasa.⁵

EUFOR RDC's working relationship with Monuc was also relevant to the principle of effective multilateralism. Problems arose because there was no unity of command between the two sets of peacekeepers, and the Europeans were faced with having to 'coordinate' with Monuc rather than approach problems jointly. There was also limited scope for a regional focus because the military mission was limited to Kinshasa. Although commanders made efforts to communicate with EU regional structures and neighbouring countries with a stake in transition, the emphasis was on a limited duration, limited scope engagement, rather than building links with key regional stabilising influences such as Angola and South Africa.

The most successful human security aspect of the mission lay in its efforts to take grassroots views into account, and implement a bottom-up approach through a highly inventive campaign to engage with local public opinion. This began as a conventional military exercise to 'win hearts and minds' and ensure an efficient two-way flow of information between the mission and the citizens of Kinshasa. Out of this, however, grew the largest circulation newspaper in the country, *La Pailotte*,⁶ which at its peak published over 60 000 copies a week, a broadcasting campaign on air eight times a day, covering seven radio stations, and focus groups and public opinion polling to provide feedback on local views of the mission.

Initial perceptions of the European force ranged from neutral to negative: people either knew nothing of EUFOR RDC or fell back on a range of deep-seated 'myths': that the troops had come to support Kabila's election; that they were there to exploit the Congo's natural resources; or that the Congolese would ultimately have to pay for the EU mission. EUFOR RDC commanders were also acutely aware that, not only might they be seen as neo-colonial 'occupiers', but that the Congolese experience with their own armed forces and those of Monuc had been tainted by incidents of human rights and gender abuses. The overwhelming majority of recorded human rights violations in the DRC are blamed on the armed forces.

Human security and a discursive shift in European–African relations

The completion of the military mission to DRC raises the question whether the EU can leverage its success as a rapid reaction stabilisation force and what its long-term legacy will be in terms of the EU's engagement in the country. EUFOR RDC itself was conscious that it had raised local expectations about European commitment to reconstruction. These will now have to be fulfilled by the two remaining ESDP missions: EUPOL Kinshasa, which is assisting with police reform, and EUSEC, which is carrying out security sector reform, concentrating on integration of militias into the national army and reorganising the chain of payments to soldiers. In addition, the European Commission has a substantial programme of governance and infrastructure assistance, amounting to over €400 million under the current framework, in addition to non-programmable aid. The military mission was planned and carried out in the context of an extensive commitment to stabilisation and post-conflict reconstruction of the country after the civil war, beginning in 2003. The holding of democratic elections – at an estimated overall cost of US\$500 million of which over half was contributed by the EU, including EU member states – was the centrepiece of this three-year process.

Yet on the one hand EU programmes lack coherence and risk being disconnected drops in the ocean of what needs to be done to provide sustainable peace in the DRC. On the other is the issue of whether the EU has found the right strategy for the DRC in putting so much emphasis on elections as a precondition for peaceful development.

The EU now faces a delicate balancing act as an external interlocutor for Kabila's newly legitimised regime. While there is a need to maintain pressure on the government to honour its commitment to peaceful reconstruction and democracy, programmes such as army reform, which go to the heart of notions of sovereignty, as well as wider initiatives on justice, are highly sensitive areas for international intervention. Even less politically charged areas of assistance such as capacity-building of civil society and poverty reduction programmes risk being tainted by an old discourse of paternalism. Continued engagement poses the threat of what Sen (2006) describes as a 'third phase of imperialism': following classic colonialism and the imperialism of the Cold War with technical and neo-liberal forms of imperialism in influencing post-civil-war reconstruction.

The EU's Strategy for Africa, agreed by the Council in 2005, which provided the context for the ESDP military and civilian missions to the DRC, appears to recognise that a shift, at least in rhetorical terms, is required to articulate the new relationship between Europe and Africa (The EU and Africa 2006). The strategy refers to a 'changing Africa', 'the acknowledgement of common values and interests and mutual accountability' and stresses terms such as partnership and equality.

The Presidency Conclusions on Africa in December 2006 also referred to principles of ownership and mutual accountability, with programmes to be worked out with ‘the involvement of civil society and other stakeholders’, with the same emphasis repeated by the first expert meeting of the EU–Africa Joint Strategy in 2007, which added the phrase ‘a people-centred partnership’.⁷ This is a significant move away from the discourse of conditionality and aid by regulation, which underpinned both the Lomé and Cotonou agreements, and which the EU admits resulted in penalising individuals. Instead the new trend is towards a dialogue structure for EU engagement with Africa.⁸

Human security may offer an important step towards cementing this discursive shift, and giving it real rather than merely rhetorical meaning. A human security policy could mitigate fears of a new wave of technocratic imperialism in EU engagement in Africa, on the part of local governments and populations, as well as provide a coherent narrative for the next stage of assistance in countries such as the DRC. Rather than, as Sen describes, Europe facilitating the continent’s civil wars and an engagement coloured by militarism or commercialism, a human security approach might allow Europe to recraft its intervention in terms which emphasise the normalisation of society and the rebuilding of base activities. While this still leaves unspecified what the EU might do in relation to the continuing involvement of its companies and commercial relations in the resources of Africa, it opens the way for a new channel of dialogue at grassroots, and one that builds on different identities – economic, democratic, gender, progressive – from traditional discourses, which had become bogged down in an aid/trade relationship where Africa was painted as subservient.

A human security approach signals a shift in the mindset of the EU, which in turn can alter the terms of dialogue with Africa, while at the same time anchoring dialogue in a clear and transparent set of norms.

Perhaps just as importantly, the principles of human security provide common ground at institutional level between the EU and the AU. There is sufficient overlap between the two visions of human security in terms of an emphasis on civil society, a holistic vision of security and development, and the key linkages between peace, governance and human rights. The potential of this lies first in fostering a mutual sense of trust and understanding between the two sets of actors, rather than a dialogue of the deaf or for the EU to be seen as foisting its particularistic cultural values on Africa. Second, human security principles offer a framework in which intervention can occur at levels other than elites or governments. The EU’s Africa Strategy emphasises multilayered and structured interactions among a wide range of institutions and representatives of society. The move away from a focus on state security and territorial legitimacy towards human-based policies opens up the possibility for other kinds of actors such as civil society groups, local and municipal authorities and regional powers to play a role in reconstruction and development. The image is one of two blocs, both moving towards

human-centred sets of policies, which, while having different emphases, could form the basis for a qualitatively different type of interaction than has existed hitherto.

Conclusion

The evolution of the EU's security policies has consequences for the trajectory of peacebuilding in Africa. While the explicit adoption of a human security policy for EU external intervention remains contested, recent developments, including most notably the EU military mission to the DRC in 2006, point to a qualitative shift in the way Europe frames such engagements. The EU's search for an active, yet normative, role on the world stage has increased interest in the concept of human security, and particularly in aspects such as a holistic approach and a bottom-up perspective to post-conflict stabilisation and conflict prevention. Concretely, the innovations introduced by the EUFOR RDC mission, together with evidence of a new rhetorical approach to assistance to Africa generally, suggest that a policy built around a set of principles that link security and development and that put individual welfare and not only government stability at the heart of assistance initiatives might inject new momentum into EU Africa relationships, for the benefit of both.

Notes

- 1 Interview, policy planning staff, German Foreign Office, 29 June 2006.
- 2 Evidence of Lt-Gen Jean-Paul Perruche, director-general EU Military Staff, to European Parliament, Brussels, 9 October 2006.
- 3 Telephone interview, Jeff Koinange, CNN South Africa, 20 November 2006.
- 4 Interview, Amigo Fonde, ASADHO Kinshasa, 4 December 2006.
- 5 The European force was mandated to ensure security at the international airport.
- 6 The name, which means 'straw hut', was chosen because it represents a traditional Congolese meeting place for the discussion of politics and civic issues.
- 7 European Council, Presidency Conclusions, December 2006; European Commission Press Release 26 February, 2007, EU-Africa Joint Strategy, EU-African Dialogue 19–23 February 2007 6767/07 (Presse 41).
- 8 Interview. Political advisor, European Commission, Kinshasa, 5 December 2006.

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