



HOUSE OF LORDS

European Union Committee

25th Report of Session 2007–08

**Current
Developments in
European Foreign
Policy**

Report with Evidence

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The Members of the Sub-Committee which carried out this inquiry (Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Policy, Sub-Committee C) are:

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Lord Boyce	Lord Roper (Chairman)
Lord Chidgey	Lord Selkirk of Douglas
Lord Crickhowell	Lord Swinfen
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Oral Evidence

<i>Mr Jim Murphy MP, Minister for Europe;</i>		
<i>Ms Jennifer Cole, European Security and Defence Policy</i>		
<i>& EU External Spend Team Leader, Foreign and</i>		
<i>Commonwealth Office</i>		
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NOTE: In the text of the report:
(Q) refers to a question in oral evidence
(p) refers to a page of written evidence

Current Developments in European Foreign Policy

REPORT

1. The Committee asked the Minister for Europe, Mr Jim Murphy MP, to give evidence on the most recent developments in European Foreign Policy. We thank the Minister for his time.
2. In the Report we make available, for the information of the House, the oral evidence given to Sub-Committee C (Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Policy) by the Minister for Europe, accompanied by Ms Jennifer Cole, European Security and Defence Policy & EU External Spend Team Leader, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, on 3 July 2008.
3. Key topics in the evidence are:
 - Discussions at the June 2008 European Council (Q 1);
 - The Irish vote on the Lisbon Treaty (QQ 1, 5);
 - The Millennium Development Goals and the Agenda for Action (Q 1);
 - Food and fuel prices, the global food market and the potential for EU action, including the need for a radical overhaul of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) (QQ 1, 4, 5);
 - The CAP “health check” and EU budget review and discipline in general (QQ 2–4);
 - The importance of the Doha round of trade negotiations and the potential for progress (Q 5);
 - The problems of the EU police mission in Afghanistan including staffing of the mission and the length of the training packages for the Afghan police (QQ 6–9, p 5).

APPENDIX 1: SUB-COMMITTEE C (FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY)

The Members of the Sub-Committee which conducted this Inquiry were:

Lord Anderson of Swansea
Lord Boyce
Lord Chidgey
Lord Crickhowell
Lord Hamilton of Epsom
Lord Hannay of Chiswick
Lord Jones
Lord Roper (Chairman)
Lord Selkirk of Douglas
Lord Swinfen
Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean
Lord Truscott

Declaration of Interests

A full list of Members' interests can be found in the Register of Lords' Interests:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld/ldreg.htm>

APPENDIX 2: RECENT REPORTS

Recent Reports from the EU Select Committee

Further Enlargement of the EU: Follow-up Report (24th Report, Session 2006–07, HL Paper 125)

Evidence from the Minister for Europe on the June European Union Council and the 2007 Inter-Governmental Conference (28th Report, Session 2006–07, HL Paper 142)

Evidence from the Ambassador of Portugal on the Priorities of the Portuguese Presidency (29th Report, session 2006–07, HL Paper 143)

The EU Reform Treaty: work in progress (35th Report, Session 2006–07, HL Paper 180)

Annual Report 2007 (36th Report, Session 2006–07, HL Paper 181)

The Treaty of Lisbon: an impact assessment (10th Report, Session 2007–08, HL Paper 62)

Priorities of the European Union: evidence from the Minister for Europe and the Ambassador of Slovenia (11th Report, Session 2007–08, HL Paper 73)

The Commission's Annual Policy Strategy for 2009 (23rd Report, Session 2007–08, HL Paper 151)

Priorities of the European Union: evidence from the Ambassador of France and the Minister of Europe (24th Report, Session 2007–08, HL Paper 155)

Session 2007–2008 Reports prepared by Sub-Committee C

Current Developments in European Foreign Policy: the EU and Africa (4th Report, HL Paper 32)

Current Developments in European Defence Policy (8th Report, HL Paper 59)

Current Developments in European Foreign Policy (12th Report, HL Paper 75)

The European Union and Russia (14th Report, HL Paper 98)

Current Developments in European Foreign Policy: Burma (16th Report, HL Paper 118)

Current Developments in European Defence Policy (20th Report, HL Paper 145)

Session 2006–2007 Reports prepared by Sub-Committee C

Current Developments in European Defence Policy (1st Report, HL Paper 17)

Current Developments in European Foreign Policy (16th Report, HL Paper 76)

The EU and the Middle East Peace Process (26th Report, HL Paper 132)

Current Developments in European Foreign Policy: Kosovo (32nd Report, HL Paper 154)

Current Developments in European Defence Policy (34th Report, HL Paper 161)

Current Developments in European Foreign Policy (38th Report, HL Paper 183)

Minutes of Evidence

TAKEN BEFORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE EUROPEAN UNION
(SUB-COMMITTEE C)

THURSDAY 3 JULY 2008

Present	Anderson of Swansea, L Chidgey, L Crickhowell, L Hamilton of Epsom, L	Hannay of Chiswick, L Roper, L (Chairman) Selkirk of Douglas, L Symons of Vernham Dean, B
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Lord Hylton

Examination of Witnesses

Witness: MR JIM MURPHY, a Member of the House of Commons, Minister for Europe, and Ms JENNIFER COLE, European Security and Defence Policy & EU External Spend Team Leader, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, gave evidence.

Q1 Chairman: We normally see you after each one of the European Councils. The June European Council, because of a whole variety of other matters, does not seem to have had an enormous amount of direct foreign policy matter included in it. I do not know whether there is anything you particularly feel you should bring to our attention. We were concerned perhaps on two matters. One was the collective efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals, on which we have been in correspondence with DfID, but also the question about the European Council taking sufficiently decisive and far-reaching action to address the problem of high food prices, not merely thinking of that as a problem for Europe but also, very significantly, for less developed countries.

Mr Murphy: You are correct in saying that the European Council had a remarkable focus inevitably on what happened in the Republic of Ireland, and I will happily respond to any questions your Lordships may have, if time allows and if you would find it helpful. As an aside to that, food and fuel prices and the Millennium Development Goals were important discussions and conclusions. On the Millennium Development Goals there was a recommitment to the Agenda for Action. The important point is that it is a recommitment without backsliding. The reason why I mention that is that, in a context of the fiscal pressures that respective governments are under in Europe, there is a continuing commitment to that. Without being too specific, there was a sense that some Member States wished to revisit or repackage how this was measured, and the achievement there is that we did not slide back at all on Millennium Development Goals. The frank assessment, which your Lordships already know about but it is a continuing frank assessment, is that we are not on track with the Millennium Development Goals and,

while the European Council discussed and reconfirmed its commitment, the plan of action at the moment does not get us to where we wish to be in the Millennium Development Goals, even with this renewed commitment and so the Prime Minister has made it very clear that we need to see further action. On food and fuel prices, there are a number of measures which I think your Lordships are already aware of in terms of the specifics announced at the European Council, but there are a couple of wider points to mention. Firstly, the conclusions and agreements at the European Council will not of themselves change the global food market. One of the things that fuels Euro-scepticism is firstly, understating achievements in the context of the European security and the things we have been speaking about, but also over-claiming success. I think it would be an over-claiming of success to suggest that the conclusions of the European Council in and of themselves . . . They can alleviate in the short to medium term but they will not resolve the issues and also we have to, in this context, recommit ourselves, and the UK Government certainly does, to a radical overhaul of the Common Agricultural Policy. Our argument is that it is actually hindering our ability to deal with global food prices, because it distorts the food market. There are others who are drawing a different conclusion from the position we are in at the moment, but in the UK Government context, we believe it strengthens our argument.

Q2 Lord Hamilton of Epsom: I raised the question of the CAP in Brussels. I was told there was some settlement in place which meant that it could not be reviewed for a very large number of years.

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Mr Murphy: That is right. What we currently have is what is catchily titled the CAP health check, which is about assessing whether the previous reforms have delivered and whether they are keeping pace. The most fundamental CAP review is within the EU budget review more generally. So in terms of the French presidency—and this is sometimes, for understandable reasons, seen as a UK–French debate, which it is not but it is seen as that on occasion. It is not just a UK French debate. It has a very close tie to the European Security Strategy because if we are going to do all these other additional things, our view is the European budget should not get larger. So in the context of doing more on security, climate change, and other matters, what is it you stop doing? As your Lordships will be aware, we are considered to be both pragmatic and principled budget disciplinarians, and therefore we have to stop doing things, and that is partly about an ending or a reduction, a remarkable reduction, in subsidies to European farmers.

Q3 Lord Hamilton of Epsom: If it all went well, how quickly could that happen?

Mr Murphy: 2013 onwards.

Q4 Lord Hamilton of Epsom: It is a long way out. What advice are you being given on food prices? The problem for farmers has been for a very long time until recently that food has been too cheap. There has been very little incentive for people to grow more. How quickly will that price mechanism cut in and what advice are you being given in terms of natural production rising because the financial incentives are there?

Mr Murphy: I do not have information to hand about the kind of production track based on market dynamics. I will happily talk to Defra and respond to your Lordships, if you would find that helpful, but we are very clear, and the Prime Minister has spoken about this, that there is a conflicting analysis or conflicting conclusions, but for us this is caused by a spike in demand and climatic pressures. It is a combination of at least both of those factors that has led us to where we are. Other people are drawing different conclusions, but, both in terms of food and fuel prices, those are the two common factors.

Chairman: Lord Hamilton might be reassured to know that the Select Committee together with the Commons Select Committee and Members of the European Parliament took evidence from the Budget Commissioner earlier this afternoon, and she is carrying out a public consultation on reforming the budget. One of the most interesting things was that almost everywhere, and not merely from the United Kingdom, the public when they were sending in their views, one of the things they were all pretty clear about was that there was a need to reduce the amount

spent on the CAP. So this is not just a British particularity. There is a good deal of support for it, even though there are these time constraints.

Q5 Lord Hannay of Chiswick: Surely, the most useful thing the European Union could do on this question of food prices, apart from producing more funds for the World Food Programme, which are desperately needed because of the fact that, of course, the funds budgeted buy much less food than they would have done before the prices rose. That I believe is going to be discussed at the G8 summit. The biggest and quickest thing the European Union could do is to conclude the Doha round of trade negotiations. On that there have been some extremely discordant noises in recent days coming out of, on the one hand, the Commissioner responsible for trade policy, and the other the President who holds the presidency of the European Union. It is pretty disturbing, frankly, because the Doha round mandate does contain within it a way in which there could be a much more market-oriented response to these high prices than if you did not proceed with Doha, because it both reduces subsidies or commits people to reduce subsidies and commits them to reducing barriers to trade, and all of that ought to enable a proper market-directed response to these higher prices which will no doubt then produce more food, as it did in the 1970s. Is the Government able to cast any light on this scrapping that is going on between the President of France and the Commissioner for Trade Policy? Is it going to lead to the sort of paralysis in the European position which would actually be very negative?

Mr Murphy: We certainly would not wish to add any heat to the scrap, so I will try and shed some light. Of course, your Lordship's initial response, which is a common response, was in the first 24 or 36 hours after the Irish vote as to why the Irish voted no. The Irish voted no because of everything and nothing really. There were all sorts of different reasons. I do believe it is a simplistic assessment to blame Peter Mandelson, particularly when you consider that the Irish farming community, albeit belatedly, campaigned for a yes vote. It is the Doha round more generally. In the context of the food price hikes, the real losers in climate change we all know are always the poor. Many UK farmers feel the pressure—of course they do, but the real losers are those living in grinding poverty, which makes the Doha round even more important. The last I heard when I have spoken to Development Ministers was that there was a degree of increased optimism about the deliverability in terms of an agreement to have international ministerial meetings on it, which in itself is an important step forward in terms of the staging. Can it be done? I think your Lordships know this. We determined that it should be done, we believe it can

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be done, but that is not the same as it will be done. We think it is a fundamental piece of international economic political architecture in the context of the things that we are talking about. We are working as hard as we can, including the Prime Minister, devoting a lot of energy to try and get the deal delivered.

Q6 Chairman: Thank you very much indeed. The last question which I would like to come to is an issue which we may well want to come back to in the autumn, because there is likely to be a further proposal for an increased size of the EU police mission in Afghanistan. In the same way as we feel it is our job to see things when they are going well, we also need to find out why some things do not go as well as they should have done. Certainly, those of our colleagues and others who have been in Afghanistan do bring back reports that the EU police mission has not been a success. I was wondering whether you could say something today, although we will come back to this, on the strategic objectives of the police mission and how far the staffing problems have been resolved, and whether you feel that steps have been taken to improve the management, effectiveness and impact of the mission.

Mr Murphy: The strategic aim of the mission, as your Lordships are aware, is about developing Afghan policing capacity to Western norms but under Afghan ownership. On the issue of staffing, I think it is a fair assessment that it has not been as effective as it could be, partially because of the delayed deployment of fully anticipated staff numbers. I have here the numbers, which were anticipated to be 232, and I think it is 153 deployed at the moment. I am advised that we expect to get to a full complement by the autumn and I will happily keep your Lordships informed of the progress towards that.

Lord Chidgey: If I may ask a supplementary, Minister, I preface my remarks by saying that it is actually now three years since I looked at the training programmes of the Afghan police, so clearly, I do not go out every week and events may have moved on, but there is one underlying issue which I would be very grateful if you could address either now or later, and that is the scale and the intensity and the appropriateness of the training that is being given to the Afghan-recruited police force members. When I was there, it was a matter of weeks that was given to incoming recruits, and in fact Lord Anderson happened to be the Chair of the Committee I was a member of at the time. The impression that has always been given in debates in this House and the other House of the numbers of Afghan police officers that have been trained has gone on a parallel with the Western norms you have talked about in terms of what we would expect a trained police officer to represent. Quite obviously, if it is a matter of weeks'

training that is available, that cannot be the case. I personally can understand that but I would appreciate it if we could have a more detailed explanation of what it is that we are trying to achieve in Afghanistan when we say that we are training police officers to provide a proper domestic police force, under Afghan ownership, to bring law and order to the country. I think is very important that we have a better understanding of what it is that we are trying to achieve and what is achievable, rather than the sort of inference, maybe unwittingly, that we are actually producing a fine body of men and women that we see patrolling the streets of Westminster looking after our interests and our safety.

Q7 Lord Anderson of Swansea: If I may just add a rider to that, on that same mission what disturbed us was the extent of the cultural differences, the unwillingness of people to serve outside their immediate area, the problems of women in the force and so on. Perhaps, Minister, it would be helpful to give us a note on the sort of problems which Lord Chidgey has described.

Mr Murphy: I will happily provide such a note. However, your Lordships may find it helpful to be aware you may already be aware, of course—that this sort of police mentoring operation is happening now in nine provinces outside the Kabul area, so that is progress. The point about the length of these training packages, as your Lordship has personal experience of having been to Afghanistan, which I have not of course, I think is a fair one; they are relatively short training packages. I will happily provide a note to the Committee with the length and investment and skills. I think the US intervention is about paramilitary and the EU one is about civilian skills. I will happily provide more details.

Q8 Lord Hamilton of Epsom: Could you also address the problem raised by Mr Klompenhouwer,¹ who made a very significant point. He said the chief of police in Amsterdam's priorities are actually dealing with football hooligans—we suggested some of them might be British—and really it was a very low priority to provide some of his policemen to go on missions abroad. That seems to be a permanent conflict. How are we going to resolve this? At the end of the day, the immediate concerns and also the worry that follows that, is that the only man you do send on a foreign mission is retired, or not very good, so you think you can let him go. How do you actually put good people on to these missions, how do have them trained, who is paying for them and all of this? I do not think much of this has been addressed really.

¹ Evidence given on 1 July 2008 by Mr Kees Klompenhouwer, Director of Civilian European Security & Defence Policy Operations, for the Committee's inquiry into the European Security Strategy. See Corrected Evidence on <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld/ldcom.htm#euc>

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Mr Murphy: I will have to provide as much as I can on that, although I reflect that when I was in Bosnia I saw the EU and NATO joint work, the military and civilian work. It is difficult to see in just a couple of days but the three days I was there I thought, after, again, a rocky and difficult start, it really seemed to me to be remarkably cohesive. Not having been to Afghanistan and seen for myself, I would not wish to say that, apart from to say that there are 59 UK experts working with the Afghan police. I will happily provide a package of information around each of these three questions.

Chairman: We will have to check what Mr Klompenhouwer said when we get the transcript but it was along those lines.

Q9 Lord Hamilton of Epsom: He did not mention British football hooligans.

Mr Murphy: No, because I would say to him that up until a couple of months ago Scottish and Welsh and Northern Irish football fans are amongst the best behaved in the world.

Q10 Lord Chidgey: Can I ask one quick supplementary for information? Minister, one of the issues you could advise us on is whether one of the reasons why there are so few British police officers available in these areas is because one of the

requirements is often that they be trained and certified to carry side arms. Certainly in the Balkans that was the case. Only Northern Ireland police officers were actually trained and experienced in carrying side arms and, of course, there was a shortage of those available.

Mr Murphy: Certainly firearms training is part of the preparation for deployment in Afghanistan. We would like to have 20 police officers in this mission. That will nevertheless remain an important part of the preparation.

Chairman: We think it is not only a question of this not having gone right. We think there is a rather fundamental problem about training policemen, a cross-cultural problem, and although we do not want to take up too much time tonight on it, we do think it is something which as a Committee we may want to come back and look at in more depth and perhaps talk to you when there is a proposal formally made to expand the size of the mission. In the meantime, could I say we are very grateful to you for having given us so much time. You really have helped us understand quite a lot of these issues. We are very impressed by the way in which you and your Department are preparing for the review of the Security Strategy and we meanwhile hope that when you have got back from the United States, you are able to have a reasonably agreeable holiday. Thank you very much indeed.

Supplementary memorandum by Jim Murphy, Minister for Europe, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

When I gave evidence to Sub-Committee C on 3 July, I agreed to write about the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan.

The Mission has now been operating for a year. The Mission's Joint Action set its objective as:

“EUPOL AFGHANISTAN shall significantly contribute to the establishment under Afghan ownership of sustainable and effective civilian policing arrangements, which will ensure appropriate interaction with the wider criminal justice system, in keeping with the policy advice and institution building work of the Community, Member States and other international actors. Further the Mission will support the reform process towards a trusted and efficient police service, which works in accordance with international standards, within the framework of the rule of law and respects human rights.”

This means that the Mission complements the much larger US police reform programme by providing civilian law enforcement expertise in Kabul, the regions and provinces. The Mission has focused on institution-building and some provincial mentoring.

The Afghan police require both civilian law enforcement and paramilitary policing skills, and trained police need a stronger organisation in which to work. International assistance is now better focused on these three planks—civilian, paramilitary and institution building. The main US effort is now at the district level with a programme called Focused District Development, which assesses the skills of police at the district level and then provides mainly paramilitary training and mentoring. The EU and US programmes agree priorities with the Afghan Interior Minister in the International Police Co-ordination Board, created last year.

The EU Mission strength has now reached 170 international personnel, with 40% deployed outside Kabul in 14 provinces. Significant expansion of the logistical base of the mission has allowed the pace of deployment to increase over recent months. The Mission's current manpower requirements stand at 232 international personnel, and more personnel are deploying this summer. The Mission provides training to all incoming personnel about security, the work of the Mission and the context in which it operates. The Mission employs

interpreters to work alongside the international personnel. In addition, UK police officers receive firearms and hostile environment training before deployment as well as briefing on UK engagement in Afghanistan, including from fellow officers already working in the Mission.

Police reform in Afghanistan is a very challenging task and the Mission needs strong support from Brussels and good leadership in-country. The Secretary General/High Representative Javier Solana visited the Mission on 21 April. The EU Civilian Operations Commander, Kees Klompenhouwer, visited the Mission two weeks after taking up his new role in May and is reinforcing the Mission's senior management team. Kees Klompenhouwer is focused on increasing the Mission's impact and putting into effect the commitment by the May General Affairs and External Relations Council to increase significantly the size of the Mission to over 400 international personnel. We have seconded UK police officers to assist this planning, which will focus on areas where the Mission can add most value in complement to the US reform programme and on setting a realistic timescale for deployment based on robust logistical and security planning.

I explained in my letter of 16 July that the Mission's current Joint Action expires on 30 September but was likely to be renewed through a no-cost extension during Recess. A draft has now issued for immediate agreement by written procedure so that financial procedures can be completed in time for a possible change in the Head of Mission. The current incumbent will complete his year in September. I expect the substantive Joint Action on doubling the size of the Mission to issue after Recess.

29 July 2008