

## Opinion: The European View: Heiko Borchert and Karina Forster

### ***EU and NATO must work together to guarantee energy infrastructure security and to define the role of soft vs hard power***

Europe and the US have a \$2.5 trillion trade relationship that depends on the steady provision of energy to keep the transatlantic community running. For this reason alone, EU-NATO cooperation is indispensable for energy infrastructure security.

Furthermore Europe's supply situation depends on security of energy infrastructure in key countries such as Russia, Algeria, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Iran, and the security of transportation through troubled regions such as the Strait of Hormuz or the Gulf of Guinea. Pipelines in particular create direct interdependencies between supplier and consumer markets, and Europe, imports roughly 85 percent of its gas by pipeline.

The protection of the energy infrastructure and the stabilisation of the broader environment in which energy infrastructures are embedded require military power. The soft power aspects of Europe's ambitious external energy agenda must be underpinned with credible hard power. This demands closer EU-NATO coordination. Yet this is hardly acknowledged in Western policy circles. Indeed, the critical role of energy infrastructure security is overlooked in the EU's European Program for Critical Infrastructure Protection (EPCIP), for instance, and in the declarations issued at last year's US-EU summit and the G8 summit in St. Petersburg.

Understandably, policymakers do not want to 'militarise' the subject. But avoiding discussion of the role of hard power in providing energy infrastructure security is wrong. If the issue is not discussed, armed forces will not be mission-ready.

#### **Hard power and energy security: where do we stand?**

So far, Europe's newly established external energy policy builds on soft power only. This was underlined by the recent summit of EU leaders in Brussels, which adopted only diplomatic language about Europe's energy interests. For instance, the summit's action plan foresees partnerships and cooperation agreements with key supply and transit countries. However, it neither advances particular initiatives to promote energy infrastructure security nor addresses the fact that energy infrastructure security has a military dimension.

Other European capstone documents also remain silent on the hard power aspect of energy security. The EPCIP, for example, refers only to methodologies to identify European critical infrastructure, standards and the role of operators in setting up operator security plans.

Even the European Defence Agency's recent long-term vision on future capability steers around energy security and energy infrastructure protection tasks. So do the policy ideas issued last year by Javier Solana, the EU's defense and security policy chief, on ways for the EU's external policy to serve Europe's energy interest.

However, when it comes to projecting power to zones of instability important to Europe's energy supply, the EU is about to reach its limits. It needs to acknowledge that the role of armed forces is important for its long-term energy security.

So far, Europe has had a free ride on the back of the United States regarding the provision of hard power energy supply security. Estimates by the Washington, DC-based Institute for the Analysis of Global Security assume that the United States spend around \$50 billion per year to defend sea lanes of communication and to provide military assistance to oil supplying partner nations.

The lack of hard power thinking on the European side could become a long-term problem for Europe and for the transatlantic partnership. In particular, Europe's geographic proximity to the most important energy supply regions, which happen to be the key strategic hot spots, makes Europe even more vulnerable than the United States. But neither is there a clear consensus within NATO about its role in energy security, though a working group has been set up to address the issue.

## **Hard power capabilities for homeland security and energy infrastructure security**

The spectrum of possible energy infrastructure security tasks to be accomplished by armed forces is broad. Some of the relevant capabilities are dual-use and help advance energy infrastructure security and improve Europe's homeland security.

Intelligence gathering and assessment, for instance, will be key. Energy infrastructure security depends on the provision of a comprehensive picture identifying domestic and international risks across the energy supply chain from supply and transit to consumption countries. This demands more and advanced intelligence-sharing between civil and military agencies, and between them and the energy sector.

Surveillance of energy infrastructure could benefit from the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, networked sensor applications or radar systems. Many of these tools are unavailable to civil emergency responders, This could open a door to cooperation with armed forces.

The same also holds true for protection of energy infrastructures. This task could range from perimeter control, establishing checkpoints, the use of advanced electronic warfare capabilities to protect information and communication technology components and challenging operations to secure uninterrupted flows of energy resources. Given the increasing importance of liquefied natural gas, maritime transportation security will become a key task in the future.

Finally emergency and consequence management could benefit from military capabilities in the fields of heavy engineering, logistics, medical aid and even the use of military fuel storage capacity. In case energy infrastructure incidents involve weapons of mass destruction, CBRNE capabilities could be needed as well.

### **Possible next steps**

Against this background we see three areas where the EU and NATO could join forces to advance the energy infrastructure security agenda.

First, *use their security/defense science and technology (S&T) programmes for energy infrastructure security*: Both the EU and NATO have dedicated S&T institutions – the EU's Joint Research Centers and NATO's Research and Technology Organisation – and research platforms such as the EU's Seventh Framework Research Programme (FP7) and NATO's Security through Science Programme.

Some of these activities directly address infrastructure security. But additional S&T efforts in information and communication technology security, situational awareness, command and control, human factors, detection and protection technologies, material science, and modeling and stimulation – to name but a few examples – could provide valuable insights.

The two organisations should study how energy-relevant production and transit countries could be included in their respective S&T projects. The EU in particular should analyse how FP7's research activities – outside the security domain and beyond the focus on energy efficiency – could be used to advance energy infrastructure security regarding Europe's energy-rich neighbours.

One of the more obvious candidates is Europe's Galileo satellite navigation network project. It could be used to provide real-time surveillance of energy networks. Given Europe's dependence on energy resource imports, Galileo services should be expanded to cover the most important production and transit countries as well. An agreement with Norway, Europe's no. 2 gas supplier, is being drawn up and discussions with Saudi Arabia are underway. To this list Russia and Algeria should be added as soon as possible, followed by cooperation with other African and Central Asian countries.

Second, *launch regional military cooperation on energy infrastructure security*. Military cooperation could be deepened via existing NATO initiatives such as the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. However, NATO lacks institutional ties with important producers such as Libya or Saudi Arabia, but has recently concluded an information security agreement with Kuwait.

For its part, the EU would have to add a fully-fledged defense diplomacy dimension to its European Security and Defence Policy and align it with the new neighbourhood policy. Furthermore a military-security dimension should be added to its external energy relations. For example, reference

to the means for protecting infrastructure is absent from the EU's new cooperation agreements with Kazakhstan and the Caucasus region.

An obvious region where both organisations could join forces is Africa. The EU and NATO should review how to bolster Africa's local security and military capabilities to address the continent's energy infrastructure security.

Finally, *stimulate mutual learning*. Exchange of lessons learned and best practices are powerful instruments to advance security/military capabilities in the field of energy infrastructure security. Web-based information-clearing houses could be established as a first step to exchange information. To this could be added workshops and joint exercises.

European experience shows there is urgent need for more cross-border emergency management exercises to strengthen public-public, public-private and private-private interaction to the benefit of energy infrastructure security. Both the EU and NATO provide civil emergency management mechanisms that could be used to this purpose.

The alliance's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Cell could be of particular use as it covers all 46 members of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and thus reaches into vital energy zones such as the Caucasus and Central Asia. Outreach programs of the EU and NATO could also be used to advance joint exercises with Mediterranean dialogue partners. ##

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