

EUROPEAN SECURITY IN THE NEW POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

National security is the most important objective of the states which make up the European international political system. What national security actually is, or is not, may be what is called by international relations theorists a "contested concept", but governments seem to know what it is and when it is under threat. It may be that the notion of national security followed by governments is narrowly focused on defence and military matters, and that a more holistic conception is more appropriate to contemporary circumstances. Also it may be that the perceptions of threat to national security, narrowly or broadly conceptualised, are mistaken. But the reality is that perceptions of national security and the practise of appropriate policies to sustain that core, intangible objective of sovereign statehood drive state policy as much today as at any time since the development of the modern international state system. A distinct sense of national security is sought as the bedrock for the creation of economic and social structures attractive to any state.

For over three hundred years the primary responsibility of state governments in Europe has been to sustain, as best they can in prevailing circumstances, the political and territorial integrity of their state. Only with very few exceptions have the governing classes willingly acquiesced to the disappearance of an established nation-state or voluntarily relinquished vital components of sovereignty. The pursuit of other objectives, no matter how high, normally falls below that of national security. Even in the complex contemporary international system this remains the case. States seek power, deploy resources and construct international agreements in such a way as not to jeopardise, and ideally to maximise, the fundamental interest of security, in whatever way a state chooses to define that elusive but very real objective.

Since the Second World War European governments, and states external to Europe but with national, political, strategic, and economic interests in Europe, namely the United States and Canada, have sought and sustained their images of security through an architecture of multilateral institutions. There was no comprehensive blue-print for European security laid out at the end of World War II. Indeed, the opposite was the case. Such was the determination of the victorious allies to address their own vital interests that no compromise could be reached over the political and security arrangements of Germany in particular, and of Europe in general. The messy institutional security framework in place in Europe when the Cold War ended was the result of a haphazard, often reluctant, adaptation to the exigencies of the intense ideological rivalry, minimal political dialogue, and sharp military competition and hostility which were the hallmarks of East-West relations on the European continent for forty five years. NATO, WTO, WEU, CMEA, EC, and CSCE emerged as the institutional instruments to the fore in a complex interface of military, political and economic efforts to protect and project preferred views of societal organisation and political sovereignty.

But these institutions are, or in some cases where, institutions born of Cold War, developing out of specific crises or addressing particular threats. And central to any understanding of the efficacy and longevity of some of these institutions was the existence of the threat in the east - the Soviet Union. Without the tyranny of the Red Army in East Europe the creation and survival of the WTO from 1955 until 1991 would have been highly unlikely. The overlordship of Soviet political and military power held the uneasy partnership of Poland, East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria and the Soviet Union together. Where Soviet military power could not reach, as in the case of Albania, then defection was possible. The demise of Soviet power meant the demise of the WTO, and its economic shadow the CMEA. During the period of Moscow's imperium in East Europe from 1945 until 1990 its security partners were not sovereign states but were vassal states. On the recovery of sovereignty three years ago, these countries decided that their interests did not lie in any alliance with the decrepit Soviet Union, nor with other East European states.

The projection of Soviet power to the heart of Europe was the vital bonding agent in the Western security institutions. Classic alliance theory makes it clear that sovereign states will relegate matters of competitive political and economic national interest, and will coalesce in a military organisation when there is an overriding security threat to them all. And for forty five years that highest common denominator was the Soviet threat. In the face of that great external threat from the east, West Europe was obliged to bury ancient quarrels and hang together. NATO was the primary institution, under whose comprehensive security umbrella secondary economic and political organisations could experiment and evolve. Conducive to the cohesion of the West European states was the requirement to present a co-operative face not just to the perceived enemy, but also to the patron superpower ally across the Atlantic Ocean without whose participation meaningful defence was not possible.

Now, Europe is in a very different security context. The old conditions and certainties of the Cold War have gone. Crucially, the Soviet Union is no more, and Russian conventional military power is largely confined to "Muscovy" and poses little conceivable threat to west and central Europe for the foreseeable future. The nuclear arsenal continues, but START I and START II have created a climate of expectations about considerable reductions. And, the political conditions when it could be brandished border on the inconceivable. Anyway, social and economic circumstances in the Russian Federation do not lend themselves to any adventurist foreign policies outside the boundaries of the CIS for a generation. Another crucial development is that Germany is no longer divided. There is now a democratic capitalist state of considerable economic power, and great political and strategic power-potential, in central and eastern Europe. This introduces a new quality of strains and tensions, as well as opportunity, in post-Cold War European security arrangements.

The end of the Cold War has made the demands of security less expensive but the requirements of security are less clear cut, less predictable, and less amenable to practical management than the relatively simple bipolar bloc stand-off of recent memory. Few elements of the old agenda remain in Europe, but there is a new pressing agenda. Over the longer term, and carrying echoes of eras prior to the Cold

War, how to create a *modus vivendi* with a resentful, isolated and nationalistic Russia, how to accommodate a thrusting, inherently dynamic great German power in the heart of Europe, and how to secure vital resources outside the European theatre top the new agenda. In the shorter term, and of a less grand strategic nature, are security challenges and risks, many of which were held in check by the Cold War. Ethnic strife and civil war as in the Balkans, state disintegration as in the cases of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, economic and political disappointments and frustrations evident in many former WTO countries, migration pressures around the European periphery, and the deluge of illegal narcotics, much of it entering through previously water-tight East European borders, are but some of the security issues crowding the stage of contemporary Europe. Successful management of the new security environment is, in some dramatic instances, proving well beyond the reach of the security institutions, for example the war in ex-Yugoslavia. Identification and assessment of some of the new range of risks and challenges, and planning the relevant and viable strategies, are highly problematic exercises. The apparent impotence of the international security and political institutions to manage and bring within acceptable control such problems damages their esteem and saps morale. Attempts have been and are being made to adapt and redesign the institutions with which Europe has grown comfortable over many decades. But there must be grave doubts if it is realistic to task these institutions with demands undreamt of even a few years ago. The political, strategic, and often economic, bases for these organisations was very different from the prevailing conditions today. These institutions, collectively or alone, were not designed to manage post-Cold War European security. They were designed for different tasks in a different era.

NATO was designed as a military alliance, and performed that difficult task well for over forty years. As with all alliances, it was an essentially military instrument used to achieve a high foreign policy objective. That objective was the containment of Soviet power. It can be argued that the high point of NATO's history was the day the Washington Treaty was signed. Thereafter, its job was to stop something happening. And, quite naturally, as decades of successful deterrence passed the question was asked if anything had ever been going to happen anyway. It was at these times of *détente* that the political dimension of the alliance was emphasised. The notion of political cohesion based on a wide community of interest was advanced to keep the alliance together. But the Soviet threat was always there to rein in the centrifugal forces inherent in any alliance of sovereign states. And with reassuring regularity Soviet "misbehaviour" would occur and NATO cohesion would be reinforced. For a generation the *raison d'être* of NATO was to deter and defend against the Soviet military threat. Now there is no threat, and there are efforts to transform NATO into a political organisation.

NATO's "New Strategic Concept" is much more than a military strategy. Some military public administration is taking place to take account of reduced forces and to give the professional military a sense of some purpose in a new environment. But when asked what threat the new multinational formations and the Rapid Reaction Corps is addressing, NATO and SHAPE admit there is no threat, only a range of risks of high and low probability. And the question of Out Of Area operations (meaning anywhere beyond the borders of the sixteen NATO members) creates confusion,

puzzlement, and convoluted analysis of the Washington Treaty. The bottom line is that NATO can do little Out Of Area, unless NATO Council concurs. But there is not the unanimity over how to respond to the multi-various risks of the modern security environment that there was over how to deter the Soviet bloc. The "New Strategic Concept" is much more about creating a political role for NATO. NATO is seen to be centre of "a framework of interlocking institutions". There are, it is claimed, three mutually reinforcing elements to the "New Strategic Concept". One element is dialogue, another element is co-operation, and the third element is collective defence capabilities. NATO's military function seems to come third to some amorphous political tasks. The limits on any new, expansive political role for NATO are demonstrated by its response to the liberated states of East Europe. Many of these states wish to join NATO, but are being held at arms length. The North Atlantic Co-operation Council was created in December 1991 in an effort to placate countries such as Poland and Hungary who wish to join NATO but find, after forty years of propaganda to the contrary, that they are not really welcome. A few times a year, ministers and senior government officials from former WTO countries and many of the new states carved out of the ex-Soviet Union meet with their NATO counterparts to discuss foreign and defence policy interests. But none of the security provisions of the Washington Treaty extend over the non-NATO members of the North Atlantic Co-operation Council. There is an acute awareness in Brussels that a large influx of new NATO members would dilute the cohesion of the alliance to unworkable levels. That to include a clutch of East European states but not to include Russia would increase resentment and suspicions in Moscow. And that most potential new members look like they would bring security problems with them, often involving close neighbours, over which NATO would find it hard to agree a common position. In the short to medium term NATO's political value will continue to be as the only institutional trans-Atlantic link composed only of the United States and Canada and West European democracies. In an era of heightened trade competition and divergent political perspectives on extra-NATO security issues, NATO will have its work cut out exploiting the long tradition of US-West European co-operation during the Cold War to fend off political and economic crises of the new world disorder.

The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, with over 50 members, covers an impossibly ambitious geographical area. Conflicts in the trans-Caucasus region and the Balkans are raging over which CSCE has little effective influence. In its early stages the war in ex-Yugoslavia was deemed within the remit of CSCE. Unable to act effectively, it tasked the EC to manage the crisis. CSCE has often been mooted as a possible successor to NATO, and a future institution for Europe-wide collective security. The irony is that CSCE was designed for exactly the opposite. CSCE came into being in the early 1970s at Soviet insistence and after many years of Soviet pressure for an all-European (preferably without the United States, but that was not to be) security conference. The central Soviet objective was to persuade the European international system to acknowledge, and at best to legitimise, the division of Europe along the borders unilaterally imposed by Soviet military power in 1945. Without the security basket of the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, which delivered to Moscow the minimum of what it required, CSCE would not have survived. In return for the "legitimation" of the WTO borders, the Soviet Union agreed to the human rights and the economic and technical co-operation baskets of the Final Act. Contrary

to Moscow's expectations, and the pessimism of many Western conservatives, these baskets did play a significant role in the ultimate de-legitimisation of the Soviet system. The main achievement of CSCE between Helsinki 1975 and the Paris Summit of 1990 was the Cold War business of arms control. The CDE Stockholm Treaty of 1986 and the CFE 1990 Agreement were conventional arms control accords which provided an impetus to the decline of East-West antagonism as well as reflecting changing political circumstances already underway.

With the Cold War clearly over the CSCE Charter of Paris 1990 attempted to set up the CSCE as a post-Cold War European security actor. A secretariat is now in place in Prague, an electoral data office in Warsaw, and a conflict resolution office in Vienna. But the scale of CSCE membership means a wide divergence of national interests. The unanimity rule and a twelve month rotating chairmanship make the institution unwieldy and precludes effective action on its core security role. In 1992, in an effort to address these problems, Germany proposed a CSCE Security Council, on the UN model. This proposal received little support.

The West European Union arose from the ashes of the Plevin Plan and the European Defence Community - failed attempts at West European defence integration even in one of the darkest periods of the Cold War. The WEU was created to control German re-armament and to reassure West Germany's uneasy NATO European partners that, barely ten years after the Second World War, a re-armed Germany could be securely managed. WEU was not conceived as an embryonic replacement for NATO. It only emerged in that prospective role in the latter days of the Cold War when it had been revived from thirty years of inaction to be a vehicle for West European defence co-operation in the light of burden-sharing pressures from the Regan administration. In some European political quarters, though not in the Conservative government in London, WEU is viewed as a potential successor to NATO in the longer term, and as a mechanism through which the EC could acquire a defence function. There is clearly disagreement between and within West European governments on this issue. And there is real hostility in Washington to any serious challenge posed by WEU to the integrity of the trans-Atlantic defence relationship. The Maastricht Treaty does propose a more concrete role for the WEU as a defence agency working alongside the EC, perhaps leading to absorption by the future European Union. If this does come to pass, despite considerable opposition and the problems of asymmetrical membership of EC and WEU, then WEU would cease to exist, and defence would become subject to the political vagaries of the new European Union. If not, then WEU would continue in a kind of no-man's-land", as a vehicle for some West European defence discussion but without the political heritage, institutional clout, and strong integrated military structure of NATO.

To date, the EC has had one broad political-security role - entangling and incorporating German power-potential into an integrative West European framework. The Maastricht Treaty continues that objective which began with the European Coal and Steel Community and carried on via the Treaty of Rome and the Single European Act. But the EC has no official defence or security functions and even under Maastricht any future security role is semi-detached and disputatious. For instance, the French Socialist government insisted that the Maastricht arrangements mean that

the WEU is subordinate to the European Union. The British government argues that the wording means it is not. France is getting its review of defence in 1996, but Britain got the treaty to say that any arrangements should be compatible with NATO. The EC is essentially an economic and social organisation, with a poor record of cohesion on foreign policy matters of a security nature. In many ways the war in ex-Yugoslavia has been a litmus test of EC security competence. In June 1991 Jacques Poos, Chairman of the EC Foreign Ministers, declared "if there is any problem Europe can solve, it is Yugoslavia". At the time it was made clear to the United States that the Yugoslav crisis was a European problem, which the EC could manage. The sense in the EC was that if the EC was capable of dealing with any external security crisis, then one directly in the backyard of the new Europe could not be more opportune. Yugoslavia was in receipt of considerable EC aid, and the EC was a major trading partner. If military force was required to back up EC mediation, then NATO military forces in Italy and on the Mediterranean would be readily available. Delay, uncertainty, and prevarication has seen the EC obliged to turn to the UN, and hand prime responsibility for any initiative to tackle the escalating crisis to the old patron power, the United States. This abject abdication of EC opportunity and responsibility, in its own sphere of influence, does not bode well for a cohesive EC security policy over issues of a less vital character.

There is no multilateral organisation which can deliver security, - ie what each European government sees as its vital security interests - throughout Europe. It may be regrettable, but one fundamental reason for this problem is that there is no political entity which accurately can be called Europe. Frequently commentators use "Europe" as shorthand for the European Community. It is one of the most prominent of Europe's multilateral institutions, but the EC encompasses only twelve states out of a Europe of - no one is quite sure. Is Turkey in Europe? What about Cyprus, or Georgia, or Armenia, or Kazakhstan? The fact that post-Cold War Europe is an extremely elastic concept - politically and geographically - is not an idle point. There is clearly a conviction on the part of many commentators that there is something which, in the 1990s, can be called Europe. This is the "new" Europe. Consciences are pricked and exasperation exhibited over the horrors in former Yugoslavia, the conflicts in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia and the poverty in Poland, Russia and elsewhere east of the EC.

To preserve the dignity and moral integrity of Europe, many voices call for action. So much money is poured into many a bottomless pit in the old Communist states, and the West European democracies have slowly but surely convinced themselves that something ought to be done about ex-Yugoslavia. When these European problems prove intractable to European solutions, the downward spiral of morale and confidence in Europe's ability to get its act together gathers pace. Hence the EC, which is a shining beacon of good neighbourliness in a brutal international system, is derided. But there is a harsh strategic reality to which policy makers between the Atlantic and the Urals (and also in Washington) must face up. There may be a vague geographical entity called Europe, but there is not a political or economic entity one can begin to call Europe. The reality is that there is a whole clutch of Europes, containing a wide variety of social, economic and political values and objectives.

Closest to home there is West Europe - the EC democracies and prosperous neutrals. These are secular, liberal, pluralistic societies, deeply committed to democracy, civil power and steady social and economic advancement. Amongst these states recourse to war to solve international disputes is well-nigh unthinkable. The central but not the sole institution which has sustained this civilised oasis is the EC. Some of its members are amongst the most heavily armed states in the world. But these weapons were not procured to intimidate (though perhaps sometimes to impress) their political and trading partners. As the dominant and crude arbiter of demand and popular will the market place stands supreme and is deeply ingrained - be it the political market place via the ballot box or the economic market place via the shopping mall. There is, by and large, a consensus as to the political and economic rules.

However, there is another "Europe", where the same traditions and rules do not apply. To have too high expectations and to invest too much political capital in rapid change towards West European ways can only bring disappointment. The non-Soviet states of the old WTO - Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania - and former Yugoslavia, have not experienced democracy and the market place for over fifty years. And even in the inter-war years, when some of these states were created or reconstituted after centuries of subjugation, their experience with liberal democracy and the market place of ideas as well as trade was rudimentary and patchy. Throughout these societies there is still a mind-set as well as a bureaucratic and often political infra-structure not much changed from the old regimes of the Cold War. Many of the national boundaries were imposed by armies within living memory, and cut communities in disparate parts, often mixing up peoples with long histories of mutual intolerance. There is no culture of democracy to resolve or manage many of these problems. The division of Czechoslovakia in January illustrated that some problems maybe resolved without bloodshed (though with considerable animosity), but the catastrophe of Yugoslavia and the continuing high tensions in parts of Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary are just cause for concern. To expect that in the new East Europe borders will remain unchanged in perpetuity just because nearly everyone is happy with borders in West Europe is quite unrealistic. It is absurd to expect the EC or NATO to somehow manage and overcome problems widely distant from them in time and experience.

And then there is still another Europe - the former states of the Soviet Union. Excepting the Baltic republics, there is no living memory of even patchy liberal, pluralistic democracy and the market place. And even before the intellectual prison cell of Bolshevism there was the autocracy of the Tsarist Empire. The social, economic, and defence requirements of these societies are even less susceptible to improvement from outside regardless of the funds thrown at them than those in East Europe. In most states the old administrative structures remain intact at middle and often higher bureaucratic and political levels. The real revolution has yet to take place, and may well proceed exceedingly slowly over the next generation, or collapse in a sudden disintegration. Whatever the outcome is, the scale and degree of change required is of such a magnitude that outside influence is marginal. The core motivation must come from within, and neither Brussels, nor London, nor Paris, nor Washington can prescribe what is best for the Ukraine or Moldova or Belarus, or

Russia itself. Only local political forces can accomplish that task, and there may well be conflict and bloodshed along the way.

What we see before us is not a new Europe, but a clutch of very different mini-Europes. Each has its own characteristics and needs. To assume that East Europe and the CIS wish to be political and economic copies of West Europe may be very mistaken. Do they yet know themselves what kind of societies they wish to be? To assume that there should not or could not be local objectives and values to which local people feel that the application of force, amongst other things, could be an essential and legitimate instrument is to fly in the face of history. To set West Europe, either through the EC or NATO, economic, political and security tasks for which it has not the deep public support, experience or machinery may make matters worse. And, at home, it could needlessly undermine the effect of the co-operative and integrative achievements of the EC in West Europe so far and in the future.

Security arrangements in the loose political entity known as Europe will need to adapt to a security market place where it will be accepted that actors will follow security policies in a direction and at a level of effort reflecting their interests. How these interests are perceived and measured is the business of the national governments. Extant Cold War institutions will contribute what they can in their local arenas, and desist from attempts, formally, to expand their security remit. Multilateral organisations such as NATO and the EC are the sum of their parts, and as NATO behaviour towards East Europe and EC achievements in Yugoslavia demonstrate, these institutions cannot do what their member governments will not agree to do. For some members to attempt to ram-rod through new security responsibilities which other members do not really wish will produce either a level of expectations which cannot be met when called upon, or lead to the premature disintegration of the institution. The EC recognition of Bosnia in the spring of 1992, and subsequent inability to sustain Bosnia's viability as a state, is a clear illustration of the former.

Outside West Europe, regional security arrangements where common interests exist should be encouraged. If such interests do not exist, then there is no practical alternative but to accept the reality of the local power balances in so far as they do not threaten vital interests of EC or NATO states. For instance, the ultimate dominance of a unitary Serbian state in the political arena of ex-Yugoslavia cannot be denied. To inhibit this, or any other such developments in parts of far-flung Europe, by extending multilateral security umbrellas, is not to face up to political and strategic realities. This is not to say that the EC and/or NATO should abandon interest. Interests of varying degrees will always exist, and diplomatic instruments commensurate to those interests will be deployed, not least to encourage preferred political and social behaviour.

If military intervention outside the European theatre is deemed essential by some West European powers in pursuit of vital national interests, then the best device is to construct ad hoc temporary coalitions, with or without direct political support from NATO, the EC or the CSCE as circumstances decree. In the very long term, the EC may encompass much of East Europe and by doing so generate common security understandings. But there are a myriad of political, economic and social obstacles to be overcome before such a development comes to pass. In the meantime, a very challenging, complex, and fast changing European security environment presents itself.

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