

European Security: New Challenges and New Responses

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The Changing Nature of Conflict

A study of history shows us that approximately every 50 years the world experiences a revolutionary change – a paradigm shift – in the nature of armed conflict, provoked by sociological, technological or other external factors. Examples from the past two centuries would be: the development of effective mass conscript armies during the Napoleonic wars (1800); the introduction of rapid-firing rifled weapons in the mid-19th Century; the industrialisation of military production and relevant infrastructure that preceded WWI; and, the development of nuclear weapons and their global delivery systems during and immediately after the end of WWII.

It seems to me that we are now in the midst of just such a 'revolutionary' change, ushered in by the dramatic developments of the last decade and brought into sharp focus on 11 September 2001. I would tentatively identify the major factors underlying this change, which is still ongoing, as follows:

- the new global power balance which has emerged following the end of the Cold War, and the consequent impact on the geostrategic significance of states;
- rapid advances in technology;
- changing attitudes to the use of armed force in Western societies.

The New Security Scene

As far as Europe and NATO are concerned, the specific elements of the above factors which have the greatest impact on the current security scene are:

- The uncontrollable proliferation of technology.

- The growing gap between rich and poor countries.
- The information revolution.

As a result we are faced today with the need to reassess what constitutes security, what are the threats to security, and what should be our responses to those threats, including the particular threat of terrorism.

As is so often the case, it is not a single cause but the combination of new factors which has created the new security conditions and which will generate new security threats. Take, for instance, the issue of the proliferation of technology mentioned above. Technological advantage in warfare is always transient. It would be unwise to assume that 'Western' technological superiority will in all cases translate into overwhelming military superiority. Today, the rapid proliferation of technology means that even small developing countries – especially those run by strong dictatorial regimes – can, by focusing their efforts, acquire weapons and delivery means which can pose a real threat to major powers. When this is coupled with fanaticism the threat is even more evident.

Furthermore, the nature of modern weaponry means that, unless the technology gap is truly enormous (as it was between the US and the Taliban), a determined and competent defender today could make a "forced entry" too costly for any country to contemplate. Forces that can be projected and maintained overseas can be ten times more expensive than conscript forces for national defence. Compare for example, the firepower that Canada and Israel can deploy for roughly the same defence expenditure. The West's capacity for military intervention may be a lot less than is sometimes supposed.

The growing gap between rich and poor countries poses a potential security problem in many ways, not just when combined with the problem of the proliferation of technology. This gap is most dramatically evident if we compare the statistics for population growth and income per capita for the countries of North Africa and the Middle East with those of Europe, and project these over the next ten years. It is wrong to blame this growing wealth gap on 'Western' countries just as it is wrong to conclude that poverty alone produces, or even justifies, terrorism. In fact, in what is now becoming known as the 'arc of instability' stretching from North Africa to Central Asia, incompetent government, social injustice and lack of democracy are by far the greatest causes of discontent. But the discontent and desperation generate such serious security problems as illegal migration and drug smuggling and create the breeding grounds for fanaticism that can in turn produce regional instability and terrorism. This is a worsening problem and one that will have to be dealt with on its home ground by proactive measures (which may be military, political or economic) as well as by protective or defensive measures in our countries. This too, has important implications for our security policy.

The information revolution is the third general factor that has so changed the security environment. This has several aspects. It is one of the factors which contributes to the proliferation of technology. It can accentuate the 'poverty gap' by making it more evident. In democracies it has two major implications. Firstly,

reliance on information technology can render a society very vulnerable to certain forms of terrorist attack. Secondly, democracies can no longer exert any control over the flow of information and therefore over the media. Yet dictatorships can, if they are sufficiently efficient, manipulate the media to a certain degree and thereby have a considerable influence on public opinion, including in democracies with which they may be in conflict. Governmental information and even military intelligence can no longer compete with the media for speed of information transit. As a result, every action which a democracy takes in pursuance of its security, be it a military operation or not, will in future be played out in a new environment – that of intrusive media attention. If we do not take account of this and plan accordingly, then our security operations will suffer severely.

Added to these general trends we have seen, in the past decade or so, the welcome collapse of the Cold War confrontation and with it, the bipolar security system. It is this which has precipitated the sudden and dramatic shift in the security environment. We have gone, in a very short time, from Cold War to Hot Peace. We have witnessed a significant change in what constitutes security.

Redefining Security: New Threats and New Responses

Only a decade ago, 'security' was synonymous with 'defence'. East and West faced the threat of WWII, characterized in Europe by the threat of invasion which was feared, with whatever justification, by both East and West. The threat was common, as was the response – mass armies based, in continental countries, on mass mobilization and conscript military service. Deterrence was by conventional defence backed up by the threat of nuclear weapons. 'Security' was measured largely in military strength.

Today 'security' means much more than just military might. In as far as 'security' its military significance, 'deterrence' is by guarantee of effective counter-attack (the difficulties and cost of which put a premium on crisis and conflict prevention). Otherwise, security has become a much broader issue. For most European/Euro-Atlantic countries, security today is primarily measured in non-military terms and threats to security are non-military in nature. These threats include – incompetent government, corruption, organized crime, insecure borders, smuggling (weapons, drugs, contraband, people), illegal migration, ethnic and religious conflict, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, shortage of natural resources (eg, water) and, of course, terrorism.

All NATO and EU member nations face these threats. But they face them in different measure, and therefore they will require a different response. This is in marked contrast to the days of the Cold War, where threat and response were more or less the same everywhere. The need for differentiated response is the factor which today most complicates the evolution of security alliances (NATO and the EU CFSP). If it is to be worthwhile, an alliance must offer each and every member a clear and unequivocal security advantage. It must repay their financial and politi-

cal cost. Today, this means that an alliance must meet the now different security needs of each of their members rather than the common need of the Cold War.

As security is no longer just a military concern, it is no longer just the preserve of MODs and MFAs which have to date been the main ministries involved in security cooperation. It is no longer possible to draw a clear distinction between external security and internal security. Security henceforth requires the coordination of the 'external' ministries (i.e., MOD and MFA) and their agencies (armed forces, intelligence services) with those of the 'interior' ministries: internal affairs, education, finance, overseas development, transport, environment, health, etc., with their agencies (policing forces, security services, disaster relief agencies, etc.). Security today takes in social development and it demands the involvement of all elements of society in a way which security in the Cold War days did not. Meeting these new security requirements demands fundamental reform of national structures, patterns of investment, and systems of government. Likewise it demands the evolution of international institutions on a truly radical scale.

Military Implications of New Threats to Security

Whilst security is now a broader concept, it still contains major military elements. Yet even here, a security threat will today require a very different military response than in the past. No longer can the threat to the defender be dealt with simply by passive defence or protective measures. These remain essential, but have changed in nature. Armies today may have to be deployed in support of domestic police operations. In addition, our armed forces will have to go out to deal with the threat in the countries from which it is generated. Forces today must expect to be projected – i.e., sent abroad – sustained there (perhaps over long periods) and used. This will not be passive peacekeeping or, as in the Cold War, deterrence by simply waiting. Troops must expect to fight.

This faces armed forces with completely different demands than was the case a decade ago. Most countries in Europe maintained large, mainly static, armed forces which deterred just by their existence. The West never really expected to have to fight a sustained conventional operation at short notice. Consequently, in the face of increasingly costly weapons and manpower, most NATO nations have been maintaining large national military structures but very low reserves of expensive munitions – an unrealistic balance. Most countries could mobilize forces only in the event of total war. The problems European countries had in deploying forces for the Gulf War and the structural reorganisation needed (for example in the British Army) to make a division viable in the field bear witness to this fact. (Warsaw Pact armies, it must be said, maintained a much higher degree of military capability – but in doing so ruined their economies). When we deployed troops for peacekeeping we did not expect them to have to fight – merely to patrol in blue helmets and white vehicles.

Today, the truth is that we are much more likely to have to deploy troops to actually fight than was ever the case during the Cold War. As a result, the kind of forces

a country needs to project, maintain and use military power abroad faces most European countries with the need for a total reform of their military systems. Very few of Europe's current two million men and women under arms can be reckoned useable in this respect. Put bluntly, much of Europe's defence budgets is spent on maintaining the wrong kind of armed forces for today's threats. In a war on terrorism, most of Europe's troops can be used only for certain limited tasks.

Most European countries, therefore, face the difficult challenge of military reform on a massive scale. Armed forces need to be more capable and flexible.

This means that they will be more expensive. Therefore, unless defence expenditure is to increase dramatically, they will be smaller. For small countries this means that they will no longer be able to field balanced national armed forces capable of conducting all the functions needed in an all-arms military conflict. This implies role prioritisation which in turn implies that an alliance approach will be essential. In this respect, NATO and the EU CFSP requirements are identical. The EU CFSP cannot in the foreseeable future provide an alternative to NATO because most EU members have not reformed their armed forces to provide credible expeditionary capability. In addition, for independent actions, the EU will have to develop C3, intelligence and logistics capabilities it does not currently have.

This is the outstanding challenge today facing European national defence and security establishments and the international institutions – NATO and the EU. Both organisations will have to evolve rapidly and demonstrate that they can indeed offer their members some real security benefits in the new era if they are to survive and flourish. Otherwise, their member nations will not fund them. If the tool cannot do the job required, why pay to keep it? Equally, both organizations will have to collaborate and coordinate their roles, functions and operations. Neither will be able in the near future to do all the tasks necessary. Here too there will have to be prioritisation and role sharing.

The Challenge of Terrorism

I have attempted to paint this new security environment in some detail so as to put Terrorism in its proper context. Terrorism is only one of the threats to security today, and it is considered a much greater threat in some countries than in others, for obvious reasons. Terrorism has many manifestations. It has been with us for a long time. There are different definitions of the terms, and to counter it requires actions on many different fronts.

When we speak of the 'War on Terrorism' we should remind ourselves that terrorism is a tactic, a means. Whilst we seek to prevent it, our real target is not the tactic but the perpetrator. Our enemy is those groups and movements which seek to overthrow our social order and which use terrorism and many other tactics (e.g., information warfare) to that end. 11 September brought this into focus. The clear distinction between 'war' and 'non-war' is now blurred. So, therefore, the distinction between the role of armies and policing forces is also blurred.

If we liken this new form of attack on our societies, which includes terrorism, as a disease – say lung cancer – then as we attempt to treat the disease, we can draw on several sources of help. The armed forces are the surgeons. The security forces (police, gendarmerie) are the doctors, dispensing medicine, chemotherapy, etc. The overseas aid and crisis prevention agencies are the health workers who try to stop us smoking and help us avoid the causes of the disease. The intelligence and security services are the diagnosticians who should give us early warning of our health problem.

Just as in medicine, all these agencies have indispensable roles to play. Just as in medicine, no one agency on its own will be effective – best effects are achieved when they all collaborate. Military power has an important role to play in the defeat of terrorism. But military force alone cannot defeat a terrorist threat. Military force can at least buy a breathing space. For example, it can deny terrorist groups a safe haven in space or time, as in Afghanistan, without which they cannot easily function. But some breathing space must then be used to tackle the problem at its source, or the military action may come to be ineffective or even counter-productive.

Likewise, domestic protection can no longer be assured by passive defensive measures alone. There will be occasions when security can only be achieved by taking the war into the enemy's camp. The problem facing much of Europe, of course, is that it does not have the military option to do that. It does not have the armed forces it needs to pursue the War on Terrorism by force. The challenge, therefore, is a manifold one: (a) to restructure military forces within an alliance context (virtually identical for NATO and the EU) so that they can play a useful role in this new form of warfare; (b) to develop other national security forces (police, gendarmeries, border guards, intelligence and counter-intelligence services, etc.) so that they can cope with the new threat, and provide for their international collaboration (either through NATO, the EU, or other agencies); (c) to develop the inter-ministerial cooperation necessary to enable the various ministries and agencies (police, intelligence services, etc.) which now need to cooperate to deal with the threat and to do so effectively; and (d) to invest more heavily in crisis and conflict prevention, including making overseas and planning part of the national security policy.

The armed and security forces themselves need to agree in concert a framework for tackling the new security threats which breaks down old barriers to collaboration. The most widely used framework is a good place to start. This divides the tasks into 'anti-terrorism actions', 'counter-terrorism actions' and 'consequence management'.

'Anti-Terrorism' is defensive – it includes all measures taken to reduce the vulnerability at home or abroad of: people (soldiers, civilians, diplomats, and workers, etc.); physical objectives; communication systems; social structures, etc.

'Counter-Terrorism' includes all proactive or offensive measures. These should aim to: identify and locate, deter, prevent, and stop terrorist activities, whether internal or external.

'Consequence Management' describes all efforts, preparatory or subsequent, to limit the effect of terrorism, stabilize the situation, and repair the damage done.

Both military and security forces will need new capabilities for intelligence and new weapons and equipment as well as a much higher degree of collaboration and training to fulfil these new tasks.

Implications for NATO and the EU

So, how should we begin to address the issue of change – of rethinking our approach to security? A good point would be to readdress the fundamentals of alliance membership in the perspective of new security threats.

To be a good member of an alliance (be that NATO or a future EU CFSP) a country should be able to do the following:

- provide an essential minimum of self-protection;
- be capable of receiving help from other allies;
- be capable of providing help to other allies.

What do these mean nowadays?

Self-protection no longer means simply self-defence. Some nations do still face a potential external military threat and will feel the need to keep traditional defences in place. For others, classic defence of this sort is not a requirement at all. For some members, the threat of terrorism is very high, for others it is very low. In a modern alliance, there will have to be very significant differences in how members prioritize threats and allocate resources to dealing with them.

Likewise the kind of help nations are likely to need from allies will also differ considerably. It will no longer just be classic military help. Interior ministries and other security agencies may now have to be prepared to open their doors to outside help in a way that they have not previously been prepared to do. The concept of what is alliance-related infrastructure will have to change. So will the understanding of which allied countries are on the 'front line' in facing new threats. It is very important to realise is that this 'frontline' is no longer a geographical issue. Patterns of intra-alliance investment will have to change, as well as national investments.

In providing help to others there are limited options, but much variation within them. Military options, as discussed above, will require forces capable of projection, maintenance and utilisation. But armed forces will also have to be capable of being deployed in domestic situations in support of domestic security agencies. Providing forward basing and logistical support will also be very important. However, sharing the burden not only of cost but also of risk and of casualties will remain an important factor in deciding how allies will need to contribute to this

function. Help, however, will not only be military. This does not offer an excuse for not making a military contribution, but is rather a recognition that (a) a response will no longer be purely military; and (b) with the best will in the world it will be some time before many European countries are in a position to make substantive contributions to a projected military force.

An additional consideration which affects all the foregoing is the impact that the source of the new threats to security will have on the evolution of security systems. In the Cold War the threat came from a clear direction – from East or West depending on the viewpoint. This geographical orientation created 'frontline states', 'rear-area states', 'flanking regions', etc., all of which had a fundamental impact not only on those nations' national psychology but also on practical preparation for conflict. The new security environment overturns this hierarchy. Firstly, geography is no longer the sole determinant of the immediacy of a threat. Secondly, inasmuch as geography does play a role, then just as the new threats destroy the clear line between internal and external threats, so they also throw up a new Strategic Alignment with a North-South or North West-South-East alignment. Turkey has replaced Germany as the keystone state for European Security. NATO's Mediterranean countries, headed by Greece, are at greatest risk from the spill-over of a conflict in the Middle East. Now on the one hand this will require a huge effort to avoid political polarization into a 'North-South' confrontation and the creation of a new political and cultural divide. On the other hand there is to a certain extent already a new geographical imperative and we must all face the fact that some countries will be playing a more important role in the new security environment than they were in the old.

The ultimate question now facing NATO and EU members alike is how to adapt not only their own national organisations to meet these new challenges, but how to adapt NATO itself and how to build EU's CFSP so that they remain (or become) capable of dealing with the new security threats. Internal mechanisms for collaboration will need to be adapted or created to cope with the different security requirements of members, to provide a framework within which members can develop specialised military capabilities to contribute to a common effort, and to ensure a collaboration by non-military security agencies which nations have hitherto been unwilling to do (as evidenced by the EU's difficulties in developing its 'third pillar'). And, as we noted above, collaboration between the EU and NATO will have to improve considerably.

The Role of Think Tanks

This is where universities and think tanks such as NDC now have a most important role to play. In all our countries, as in the corridors of NATO and the EU, the current pace of events faces civilian and military staffs with enormous burdens of overwork. There is no longer enough time to deal with everyday problems and find enough time for conceptual thinking. After all, the scope of change being force upon institutions is the greatest that it has ever been in peacetime.

Consequently there is a great need to generate ideas, stimulate thinking and debate on all aspects of security reform, to break down boundaries between different elements of the security establishment and to expand the frontiers of what is considered 'security'. There is an equal need to increase the strength of the 'security community' – the body of military and especially of civilian personnel competent in the new security issues and capable (a) of filling posts in national and international institutions; and (b) educating the population to understand the new needs of security so as to ensure their support through the democratic process.

This is both a short-term and a long-term requirement. The university and think tank is now the interface between the brainpower of the academic community on the one hand, and the overworked policy community, which needs intellectual support, on the other. It is also the cradle for educating the new generation to deal with the security threats of today and tomorrow.