International Security - One Paradigm Change after the Other

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During the past two decades our basic notions of security underwent repeated changes. To account for these changes, this piece deals with the most important historical events that shaped our understanding of security as well as the new challenges ahead such as the systemic changes, regional security initiatives from the EU, changing roles of militaries in advanced democracies and recent austerity measures' effects on the security sector.

1. The Last Two Decades and the Evolution of the Security Concept

The fall of the Berlin wall and the subsequent demise of the Soviet Union put an end to the overriding priority given to collective defence against the conventional superiority of the Warsaw Pact. The ideological challenge of communism disappeared when Gorbachev´s attempt at communism with a human face petered out and Russia failed to become a modern power. Subsequent years saw the emergence of ethnic violence in the post-communist states, especially in former Yugoslavia. The international community was still in the mode of peacekeeping as it had been practiced during the Cold War - only when a cease fire was in place and holding, and the parties to the conflict agreed to the UN peacekeeping operation. The crises in Africa made 'robust' peacekeeping acceptable and the Bosnian conflict transited from peacekeeping to peace-enforcement. In the meantime NATO had overcome the assumed prohibition of 'out-of-area' operations (which had given a rejuvenated Western European Union a brief spell of activity in clearing mines in the Gulf during the Iran-Iraq war and in enforcing an embargo on Serbia on the Danube).

The shock of the Al-Qaeda attacks on the twin towers in New York and the Pentagon – the symbols of American economic and military power – changed the focus again. NATO invoked its article V, but not because of an attack on Western Europe but on the US. Washington declared a war on terror, which it wanted to fight largely unilaterally: "Don't call us, we'll call you" was the answer to helpful allies, and NATO was relegated to an American tool with the maxim that "the crisis determines the coalition", instead of the Alliance responding to a common threat. Oddly enough, the Bush administration soon shifted its focus from Afghanistan to Iraq, where it obtained a quick military victory but almost lost the peace. International relations should not occupy itself much with 'what if' questions, but in view of the subsequently prolonged engagement in Afghanistan one might wonder whether we would ever have gone there if the Taliban had agreed to expel Osama Bin Laden. Far too long the link between Taliban and Al Qaeda was assumed to be a determining characteristic of the terrorist threat. Not surprisingly President Obama had great difficulty in finding an answer to his question what the US were doing in Afghanistan, especially after

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Osama Bin Laden had been caught and killed (in Pakistan)[1]. Too much policy was being driven on the automatic pilot. Was the main purpose to kill terrorists in counter-insurgency operations or the much larger task of protecting the population and promoting good governance? The final paradox was that the war on terror - which most Europeans thought to be unwinnable because terrorism is a method and not a cause in itself – was becoming a legal pretext for using drones for eliminating acknowledged terrorists on the territory of a sovereign state, even if the victim was a US national.[2]

Partly due to the fear of terrorism, but more on account of the overall process of globalisation, external and internal securities were merging. Internally, terrorism was largely a matter of the police and the intelligence services. Border controls became important against organized crime, drugs trade, human trafficking and illegal immigration. Conversely, Western Europe with its graying population needed immigrants over time, but wanted to restrict them to skilled labour.

NATO and the European Union struggled with the new threat environment. In 2003 Xavier Solana developed a strategic document for the EU which regarded terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and failed states, often in combination with organized crime, as the main threats. But he added the need for a multilateral approach with the UN Charter as the main framework, and made the point that today crises could not be resolved by military means only. In November 2010 NATO finally was able to agree a new strategic concept of its own, which now mentioned weapons of mass destruction before the terrorist threat. Much of the delay was due to the fact that the new members of the Alliance gave priority to the collective defence clause of Article V, while the old members saw a modern NATO dealing with new threats. A compromise was found by emphasizing the consultation clause of Article IV.

The revolts in Tunisia and Egypt were not a clash of civilisations, not religiously inspired, but rather provoked by high food prices and lack of jobs for the young plus a feeling that the old regime no longer was adequate to deal with these problems. Yet, an announcement by President Mubarak that he would not stand for re-election might have changed the course of events. The Libyan crisis of 2011 was different because the population was neither poor nor hungry. NATO played an important role, but not under American leadership and only after France and the UK had, without much consultation, decided to aid the rebels in Benghazi. Without their early support the revolt against Colonel Gaddafi might not have succeeded. The crisis was remarkable in several ways: the UN Security Council agreed to ask the International Criminal Court to examine whether Gaddafi was guilty of crimes against humanity. Furthermore it authorised "all necessary means" to protect the civilian population, including a no-fly zone, but short of the dispatch of ground forces .[3] China and

[1] Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 2010)

[2] Anwar al-Awlaki, a top Al-Qaeda cleric, was killed in Yemen on 30 September 2011, apparently aided by intelligence from the Yemen government. Michael Peel, "Yemen Says Tip-off Aided Awlaki Killing," *Financial Times*, October 2, 2011.

[3] UN Security Council Resolution 1970 of 26 February 2011 recalled the Libyan authorities' responsibility to protect its population; referred the matter to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, and declared an arms embargo, a travel ban and assets freeze. Res 1973 of 17 March 2011 declared a no-fly zone and authorized all necessary means to protect the civilian population short of ground forces. It reiterated the Responsibility to Protect and reaffirmed "that the parties to armed conflicts bear the primary responsibility to take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of civilians". "UN Security Council Resolutions, 2011," United Nations, accessed January 3, 2012, http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutions11.htm.

Russia abstained as well as Germany and India, and in the implementation less than half of the NATO members took an active part. This raises the question whether this is a prelude for not only a new division of labour in transatlantic relations, but also whether in future 'coalitions of the willing' within the Alliance might become a model. In itself it is not necessary for all members to contribute forces to every operation, as long as the principle of the action is endorsed by all, or at least not contested. In the EU the Treaty of Lisbon explicitly mentions the possibility of 'Permanent Structured Cooperation' among a group of members willing to enter into more binding commitments towards each other.

The resolutions of the UN Security Council on Libya revived the notion of "Responsibility to Protect", the initiative of Secretary General Kofi Annan which in 2005 was only partially successful and had not been implemented. The principle was restricted to flagrant violations of human rights: genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crime against humanity. Nevertheless, R2P as it became known, was important in reducing absolute notions of sovereignty which had bedeviled the UN since its inception. It formulated a duty of the state which could be discussed in an international context. It was similar to the principles of the Final Act of Helsinki of 1975, which made the way a government was treating its own population a legitimate subject of international intercourse. Before 2011, however, the Security Council did not base its resolutions on R2P and preferred to base its resolutions on a ´threat to peace and security.

2. Models of Future World Order and Security

Should we elevate the undermining of many of our acknowledged assumptions to the Olympus-like status of paradigm change? Or is it just a new proof of the complexity of international affairs which takes unexpected turns and can best be described in Murphy's laws that things will go wrong and everything will take longer than expected? Paradigms should assist us in understanding the nature of international relations, like the Realist school, Liberalism or the English school of constructivism. They are the scientific spectacles through which we perceive the many signals from the world around us.

Looking at models of future world order the Netherlands Future Policy Survey came up with four generic models. The least attractive was the trend of fragmentation which can be observed in some regions but also within existing states. In this model multilateral cooperation loses its significance and everybody is thrown back on his narrow national or regional interests. This situation leaves little room for solving trans-border issues and mitigating extreme nationalist behavior.

Another model is a network society, which leaves little governance to the State, but uses all kinds of formal and informal networks available in an age of globalization. Some good like ICT networks and many non-governmental organizations in the field of human rights and development, but some bad like the Mafia or hackers disrupting our communications networks. For the time being, however, the Westphalian states-system shows surprising staying power.

Much discussed but poorly defined is the model of multipolarity, an absurdity in terms of physics, but a reality by the rise of new economic powers. Several countries show growing economic clout, but there are few political linkages among them. The BRIC coun-

tries – Brazil, Russia, India and China, soon to be joined by Indonesia and South Africa and perhaps Turkey – have little in common. There is no cement among the bricks and most of them have few friends in their region. To the contrary, Chinese assertiveness around the Spratley islands leads the previously primarily economic group of ASEAN to take a political profile and to rise its defence spending.[4] Multipolarity as a concept is not so much the possession of more or less equivalent (and largely economic) power, but rather a model in which other smaller states coalesce around the various poles. So far, such groupings do not seem to materialize. Moreover, it would be difficult to compartmentalise the world into a set of regional hegemons. Issues like world trade, energy, environment and nuclear proliferation require global approaches.

In his keynote address to the 8th IISS Global Strategic Review of 2010 under the title "Power-shifts and Security" Henry Kissinger quoted Niall Ferguson, who coined the term "a-polar world": a model in which an overstretched United States gradually recedes from its hegemonic role around the globe, but is replaced by … nobody. China would be too focused on maintaining internal stability and economic growth to take on broad international commitments. Europe was hobbled by its long-term demographic decline. Thus, in the absence of a global rule-keeper, religious strife, local internecine conflict and non-state rogue actors like Al-Qaeda would rent the world.

The most attractive model is the one of multilateral organization in which states consult and cooperate in regional organizations on a broad spectrum of issues and use the United Nations as an overarching framework. Most international organizations are intergovernmental, which puts severe limitations on their effectiveness in carrying out joint programmes. Only a few have a mix of rights and duties and arrangements for dispute resolution, like the World Trade Organisation.

As a rules-based organization the European Union still has the pride of place. No other organization has such a wide spectrum of activities and such a complete decision-making system. Nevertheless it is far from ideal: a mix of an intergovernmental (for foreign affairs, security and defence) and a communitarian system (with initiative for the European Commission, decision making in the Council of Ministers with majority voting and co-decision by the European Parliament, and a Court of Justice to enforce the law throughout the Union). Moreover, as shown during the Greek financial crisis of 2011, there is a certain tension between on the one hand the regulation of fair competition in the internal market, and the cooperation and solidarity required on other issues.

The European Union was a reluctant security actor, but might be forced to take more responsibility, particularly on its periphery, like in North Africa. Most of its operations have been small and of a civilian or mixed civilian-military character. Its largest operation is Althea in Bosnia, taken over from NATO's Stabilisation Force. For large operations only NATO will be qualified, but then with the assistance from the United States. In the Libyan case during 2011 American assets were needed to suppress air defences, for mid-air refueling and for satellite information. Subsequent bombing, however, was done by European forces, which supported the rebels, but did not contribute ground forces. The rebels were

[4] While China refers to the South China Sea, ASEAN countries call the area the West Philippines Sea. ASEAN has developed a model of its own by focusing on topics where the members agree, rather than on controversial issues.

strong enough on the ground, which negated the earlier argument that for a substantial victory air-power alone would not be sufficient and would involve large collateral damage. The latter assumption is being increasingly contradicted by the great precision made possible by new targeting and delivery means.

3. Regional Efforts for Security Building: The EU Enlargement

After the fall of the Berlin wall the division of Germany ended and thereby also the division of Europe. NATO and the EU underwent a rapid process of enlargement, culminating in 2004 with the accession of ten new members to the EU. Bulgaria and Romania followed a few years later, but did not live up to the expectations of the reform of their legal and judicial systems. As a consequence other candidates for membership were subjected to much tougher standards of conditionality. The earlier assumption that reform would be accelerated by being taken into the Union rather than staying out a bit longer, no longer was valid. Instead the process is becoming more political, enhanced by growing skepticism in the old member states about the benefits of European integration. The negative outcomes of the referenda in France and the Netherlands have contributed to a re-nationalisation of political objectives and of the way they should be pursued. The same applies to military force planning. In this respect the model of fragmentation casts an ominous shadow.

In the meantime NATO grew to 29 members, with Croatia and Albania joining the Alliance. Ultimately all countries of former Yugoslavia should join both organizations, but the pace undoubtedly has slackened. Macedonia is blocked by Greece and Serbia still has to overcome the legacy of the war and the independence of Kosovo. Bosnia made little progress in forming a truly multi-ethnic state. Both NATO and EU will follow the line that they should refrain from importing new problems. The entry of Cyprus in the EU without a solution for the relationship with its Turkish minority resulted in a serious blockade in NATO – EU relations and a suspension of many chapters in the EU accession negotiations of Turkey.

Further East not much progress is to be expected. After the Georgian war and the change of government in Ukraine the time for accession does not seem ripe. More than an intensification of the Eastern Partnership on specific issues seems unlikely, notwithstanding the enthusiasm of the Polish EU Presidency to move this process further. In any case, security sector reform (or the more palatable term of security sector governance) will continue to be an important subject, not only for future accession prospects, but also for internal transparency and accountability. A clear definition of competences between, president, prime minister, minister of defence, and the Chief of the General Staff, and of the modalities of parliamentary scrutiny are essential in any system of good governance.

4. Changing Role of Military in Advanced Democracies

Increasingly a distinction is made between wars of necessity and wars of choice, the latter being inherently selective and subject to political debate and parliamentary scrutiny. New elements were introduced in the decision making process: the intensity of the crisis, the chances of success of the intervention, the cost involved, and a comparison with what others were doing.

Whether peacekeeping or peace-enforcement, the tasks of the military have been expanded beyond their traditional skills. Military personnel became mediators, fulfilled functions in local government, repaired roads and other infrastructure and tried to win the ´hearts and minds´ of the people in their sector of responsibility. Europeans were familiar with this new approach in their peace support operations in the Balkan. In the US the change from outright war-fighting was made by General Petraeus in authoring the *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, which – probably too ambitiously - saw the modern soldier also as a social worker, urban planner, anthropologist and psychologist.[5]

Even in a more narrow definition of ´peace support operations, the spectrum of activities has broadened substantially. They stretched from preventive action, intervention, post conflict stabilisation, reconstruction, security sector reform and ultimately good government on the basis of transparency and accountability. Obviously those new tasks made high demands on the training of missions and on the preparation for each specific operation. The time is past that the commanders could say that forces equipped for the end of military operations could also deal with lesser levels of violence. Close cooperation with civilian authorities and experts and non-governmental organizations became essential for the success of a mission. The US learned that hard lesson in Iraq where the military campaign was short and successful, but the peace was almost lost in an ethnically divided country.

A special complication arose in those situations where the use of force becomes a major part of the operation, such as in Afghanistan. Then national governments insist on the application of 'caveats', limiting the range of duties their personnel might be asked to perform by the international force commander. Varying caveats make his constraint management a daily headache.

The degree of parliamentary involvement in military missions abroad varies widely. Some insist on approval of a special budget, others demand periodic reporting on how the missions fulfill its original mandate. More general practice is parliamentary approval of the dispatch of their soldiers abroad. For civilian missions this requirement usually is much less severe, because the use of military force inherently involves matters of life and death. Parliamentary approval takes time and adequate preparation, which clashes with the need for rapid intervention. In those cases a form of pre-delegation for a specific scenario might be considered. This is particularly relevant for multinational forces like the NATO Response Force and the EU Battle Groups.

5. Challenges of Austerity

The most recent paradigm in understanding new challenges to security is austerity, which obliges states to curb budgets in the light of deficits in many fields of government expenditure. Housing bubbles, over-consumption and little savings, greying populations demanding more health facilities and upsetting pension calculations, are leading to fundamental questions about the basic functions of the state. Already they are affecting defence budgets all over the West 'Pooling & Sharing' is the new slogan, which should lead to greater efficiency

[5] David H. Petraeus, James F. Amos, and John A. Nagl. *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007)

at less cost, thus liberating funds for the necessary modernisation of our military and the procurement of new equipment. This becomes particularly necessary when individual inventories fall too low to remain militarily feasible and overhead costs rise beyond proportion. But who is prepared to pool and share? There are some examples in the bilateral sphere and the initiative for an air transport pool is promising. A naval surveillance system links headquarters in eight countries. The Netherlands participate in the UK/Netherlands Amphibious Force, in far-reaching naval integration with Belgium, and in the German Netherlands Army Corps which proved its value as a headquarter in Afghanistan. All are valuable initiatives, but most of them have not resulted in joint deployment at the unit level.

As Tomas Valasek noted[6], many countries seem intent on maintaining irrelevant forces rather than thinking about new ways of making them more efficient. He suggested 'islands of cooperation' between countries with a similar strategic culture and comparable interests, and to focus more on the pooling of assets than on joint deployment of forces. Common use of assets would be the best force multiplier. Clearly, much could be gained by pooling expensive training programmes, perhaps even air-bases and port facilities. But ultimately some multilateral framework should be preserved. The standard operating procedures and rules of engagement are some of the most valuable achievements of NATO. The islands of cooperation should not deviate too much from each other and in this respect the term 'clusters' seems preferable to 'islands".

Unfortunately, the European Defence Agency which started in 2004 did not yet live up to its expectations. The intention was to bring requirements, research and development, and joint production and common production much closer together. EDA had some success in making the defence equipment market more transparent, but even today the number of common projects does not exceed that of its predecessor, the Western European Armaments Group, which had a much narrower focus. Much would be gained if defence planning would be multilateralised, at least regionally. Today the austerity measures take place in splendid isolation, with unforeseen consequences for the maintenance of important capabilities. Currently, however, the trend seems to be bilateral, with the Franco-British agreement taking away much of the momentum of the EDA.

Earlier, on 6 December 2010 the foreign ministers of France, Germany and Poland had written to the High representative, Baroness Ashton, to ask her to work on the improve ment of EU – NATO relations and on the creation of permanent civil–military planning and conduct capabilities. This move from the so-called 'Weimar group' was repeated on 5 May and 2 September 2011. The last letter, also signed by the foreign ministers of Italy and Spain, encouraged the High representative "to examine all institutional and legal options available to member states, including Permanent Structured Cooperation, to develop critical CSDP capabilities, notably a permanent planning and conduct capability". Lady Ashton had shown herself rather reluctant by saying that she did not take hasty decisions on the final set up of crisis management structures, but obviously she was aware of British opposition to

[6] Tomas Valasek, *Surviving Austerity, the Case for a New Approach to EU military Collaboration* (London: Centre for European Reform Essays, 2011); Tomas Valasek, *What Libya Says about the Future of the Transatlantic Alliance* (London: Centre for European Reform Essays, 2011)

establishing a civil-military headquarter. Nevertheless, this would be the only way to mobilize all instruments of the EU efficiently and to do so in a manner which would minimize competition with NATO. The High Representative was more supportive of the idea to increase the preparedness and responsiveness of the battle groups which would be on stand-by in 2013. One of the ideas is to make the group of countries forming an ad hoc battle group into a permanent team, which would make them more cohesive and better trained. Using Valasek's ideas, this would foster clusters of cooperation.

6. Conclusion

The security sector and the military profession have changed and will continue to change. Large scale ground warfare seems to be a thing of the past. In fact, the resistance to the dispatch of sizeable ground forces is likely to grow. Instead we see special forces, highly trained and professional, mobility with helicopters, drones for reconnaissance (also for many civilian purposes like disasters and surveillance at sea and on land) but also for precision strikes. In peace support operations the army is doing abroad what the police do at home, but adds their protection capabilities. It will be a revolution in military affairs, but different from the predictions of some time ago when network enabled capabilities were supposed to replace boots on the ground. Future operations will be of a mixed military-civilian character from the start and will slowly obtain a larger civilian profile. Also in the field of development activities the nexus with security should be recognized more. Without a minimum level of security, all development assistance will be a waste of money. And as far as the threats are concerned, terrorism has become a matter for the police and the intelligence services, area defence against ballistic missiles does not yet seem urgent, but failed or failing states (with the wonderful euphemism of Low Income Countries Under Stress, LICUS) should get priority in a globalizing world. Together with organized crime in all its new modalities, like hacking and cyber war. Whether paradigm change or not, defence and security need a close look in order to set priorities for the near future. Traditionally defence is a matter for the long haul, and our equipment will have to serve for decades. But we can hardly look ahead for more than a decade. Consequently, we have to be able to switch direction quickly to be able to meet new contingencies, like a nuclear armed Iran, but the primary need for NATO and EU is to remain capable and coherent for meeting the problems we face now.

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