

***European Security at the Turn of the Millennium:
hopes, faultlines, alternative futures***
Geneva Center for Security Policy, 8 January 1998

INTRODUCTION:

The British/Austrian historian, Eric Hobsbawm, just last week honoured as a companion of the British Empire, wrote a book called the age of extremes in which he describes what he calls the short twentieth century, lasting from 1912 to 1989. What struck me most about this book – and what came to mind as I sat down to prepare this lecture – was his assessment of this century, on one hand as the most productive and creative century in human history, but on the other, as the bloodiest in recorded history,

- bloody because of the frequency of internal and international war,
- bloody because of the wholesale involvement of civilians in such excesses,
- bloody because of the terrifying power and reach of new weaponry.

And Europe, of course, had its share of the bloodiness.

So a key question for me in preparing this lecture has been whether the 21st will be as bloody, more bloody, or as I am sure we all hope, considerably less bloody than the 20th. My view is that the future is still open, certainly as concerns Europe and its security.

I will explore this question in three parts.

1. In the first part, I will describe what you might loosely call the Euro-Atlantic democratic peace, and the hopes that are associated with it as we move up to and into the third millennium
2. Second, I will talk about a number of faultlines on which the edifice of the Euro-Atlantic democratic peace rests; in other words, challenges to European security that are potentially serious enough to bring the entire edifice down – I call these challenges faultlines because I liken them to weak points and cracks in the ice that can break wide open if too much pressure comes to bear on them.
3. Third, I will look at the different ways European security may develop in future. This will not be an exercise in prediction but rather an effort to capture Europe's most likely possible security futures by projecting forward the dominant tendencies of the present.

THE EURO-ATLANTIC DEMOCRATIC PEACE

After the sobering developments of the first years of post-Cold War – the wars in Yugoslavia, Chechnya and elsewhere in the Caucasus and further east into the Eurasian landmass – I would say that there now reigns a new realism about the prospects for a successful transition. We understand

- that things are going to take longer and
- that they are going to be tougher than was originally espoused in 1989/90.

Still, optimism still tends to dominate in official visions of the future.

This optimism tends to be based on considerations that have prevailed from the earliest post-Cold War period. Together, they make up what you might call the Euro-Atlantic democratic peace.

For me, this Euro-Atlantic democratic peace is based on the following five notions:

1. Democracies tend not to fight one another
2. Democracies go to war more often than dictatorships but generally for good cause, mainly to protect democratic values
3. Therefore, it makes good sense to adopt, as a primary security policy objective, the creation of a widening family of democracies, constructed around the core group gathered together in the European Union and NATO
4. Fourthly, the Euro-Atlantic democratic core embodied in the EU and NATO have important assets they can use to this end
 - Their example of a long-lasting democratic peace among themselves
 - Their wealth, substantial even if not unlimited, for use in supporting the transition
 - Their institutions- security, financial and otherwise – as ideal frameworks for projecting Western practices and values eastwards
5. The fifth idea is that on the fortunes of the Euro-Atlantic democratic peace ride the hopes not only for a successful transition in Europe but also for the building of an ever-broadening coalition of democracies worldwide.

A few points of clarification. The democratic peace does not exist in any formal sense. And in academic circles, there is much debate about its existence or relevance as a term for explaining what is going on.

For example, some observers insist that it is not democracies that do not fight one another but liberal democracies, ie those

- guaranteeing freedom from arbitrary authority, or the right to free speech and freedom of conscience, and to private property
- offering social and economic rights, and
- securing the right to democratic participation and representation.

Others insist that it is the nature of the international system that it is decisive in determining state behaviour, and that with the end of the Cold War and the return to a multipolar world, the natural tendency of states to mistrust and compete with one another dominates.

Then there is a methodological question that the democratic peace leaves unresolved, namely,

- Does the democratic peace presuppose that western institutions enlarge to embrace newly democratising states, rewarding the best-performing ones among them first as way of encouraging those doing less well to redouble their efforts?

Or

- Is it more stabilising for these institutions to resort to ad hoc, flexible means of projecting the democratic peace eastwards, in view of the risks of division, isolation and exclusion associated with enlargement projects?

We will return to this question later.

To conclude this theme, let me just say that the issue of the democratic peace is anything but abstract. It goes to the core of the ongoing debate in the United States about the purpose and objectives of US security policy towards Europe and elsewhere.

FAULTLINES

Under my second heading – **FAULTLINES** – I would like to talk about some megapolitical problems that I believe shape the present and future of European security. So I will not dwell on individual risks or threats. These will form the focus of other lectures later in this course or are already well known to you.

Rather I will focus on the structure of European security and the faultlines in that structure that I think will prove decisive in determining whether hope for a continuing democratic peace can in fact be realised.

There are in my view three main faultlines

1. The state of the Westphalian state, 350 years old this year
2. The dangers inherent in democratisation and dedemocratisation
3. The prevailing leadership paradigm within the Euro-Atlantic community.

My main argument is that perestroika and the processes of qualitative change that it unleashed in CEE and the FSU are part of a larger process of historic transition that encompasses not only erstwhile communist states or the pre-modern structures of Africa, but extends to the western world. This process takes on different forms and moves at different paces from environment to environment. But its western version is no less critical for that. In fact, I would go so far as to say that without a western perestroika, it will be very difficult to bring the eastern perestroika to a successful conclusion. Let's look at the changing state first.

The changing state

Since the end of the Cold War, in Europe we have seen a number of states disappear, reappear and form totally anew.

- Unification of Germany
- Breakup of Yugoslavia into 5 or 6 states, depending on how you interpret relations between Serbia and Montenegro
- Breakup of Czechoslovakia into 2
- Breakup of the USSR into 15 states
- Breakup of Russia into 2 states, depending on how you interpret the Russian/Chechen peace accord

For a total of 23/24 new states.

In post-Cold War Europe, the actual reconfiguration of states has thus far been restricted to formerly communist states. But there are reasons for believing that this is a process not triggered solely by the ideological and material bankruptcy of communism nor limited to the post-communist eastern part of the continent.

In this connection, there are several theses I would like to put forward .

First, from a historical perspective, statal change is the norm. More than 90% of all states that have ever existed have broken up (Nietschmann, 238).

States come and go in history, especially tending to go after wars but not always.

Of course, I do not want to suggest that 90% of European states are in the process of breaking up, or will do so anytime soon. But clearly something is going on. 500 hundred years ago Europe counted some 100 states. The number in the process of conquest, consolidation and centralisation process that followed had reduced their numbers to 30. Now, Europe counts almost twice as many state actors.

My second point is that there are powerful forces pushing for statal change at this particular point in history. They have combined with those that militated for an end of the communist system but they are much larger than that. As a result of such factors as technological change and globalisation:

1. The decentralising impact of new technology makes production less dependent on the centralisation of resources that has traditionally characterised many of our states. It has become possible to resolve ever more problems of state at lower levels of aggregation.
2. Territory has become less important in the generation of wealth.
3. Access to information has become increasingly democratised.
4. Government activity in whole sectors of economic and cultural life has waned.
5. Economic processes are increasingly internationalised and subject to the forces of global competition.
6. The struggle to establish or maintain sovereignties unfolds against the background of national governments proving less and less capable of shaping in isolation what happens within and beyond their borders.
7. Cumulatively, this can result in the emergence of new frameworks for wealth creation that eclipse the traditional state framework. Let me give you an example from the reality of my own country, but I could just as easily be citing figures from the Lyon–Turin – Geneva area or from that of St Petersburg–Helsinki. In 1981, Ontario, Canada’s largest and wealthiest province, exported roughly equal amounts to Canada’s other provinces and the rest of the world, some \$ 40 billion. 14 years later, rest of the world exports at \$140 billion equaled three times as much as the intra-Canadian exports. In 5 years, from 1991-95, the growth in rest of the world exports grew 8 times faster than the intra-Canadian exports. Some 80% of this was to the US. (KWS, 29 December 1997, Paul Wells quoting Tom Courchene, p.8).

This means that there are important pressures on states to change throughout the Euro-Atlantic community. These can result in very different reactions:

- from center-led downsizing and devolution,
- to extended confusion and crisis
- to the eclipse and disappearance of individual states altogether.

But which states tend to face larger restructuring challenges is difficult to generalise. For example, the fate of states such as Russia and Canada might suggest that bigger states find it most difficult to re-engineer but then there is the case of Britain, which has been at the leading edge of the process. And while ethnic diversity seems to make the process of restructuring infinitely more challenging, Italy and Greece are not being spared substantial pain.

The fourth point is obvious - that the pressures for statal change can create enormous security headaches domestically, regionally and internationally. It is very difficult for those not directly involved to walk away from them, but at the same time the pressures to focus on one’s own problems can be similarly demanding. The debate over whether and how one should intervene in Yugoslavia is a case in point.

Fifth, while larger catastrophes in Europe are by no means pre-ordained, Europe faces serious challenges in view of the weakness of its pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis capabilities. This is a problem by no means unique to Europe, of course. But the more Europe seems to be in need of such capabilities, the less it seems able to generate them. The outcome of the Amsterdam Summit is a case in point, as is the continuing preoccupation of Germany and France – the traditional motors of integration – with their domestic agendas.

To conclude this point, I anticipate that the 21st century will be characterised by rising demands for decision-making powers to be transferred flexibly among various levels of aggregation in keeping with changes in society, economy and identity.

On occasion, this will necessitate the reconfiguration of existing states to accommodate new and more powerful realities. These are powerful processes that stir powerfully established interests. They can be the cause of much conflict.

Democratising Dangers and Democratic Deficits

The dangers of the democratisation process and the deficits of developed democratic systems constitute another faultline. Let's look at the latter first.

The notion that democratisation can be a dangerous process does not necessarily contradict the idea of the democratic peace but it places a serious mortgage on it. Basically the idea is as follows:

1. Democratising states are more likely to be involved in war than either authoritarian or democratic states
2. This propensity is at its greatest in the first ten years after democratisation begins (Examples: liberalising Britain at the time of the Crimean War; Napoleon the Third's France that destroyed itself in the Franco-Prussian War; Wilhelmine Germany prior to WWI; democratising Japan in the 1920s.)
3. Why?
 - Nationalism = handy replacement of fading ideology both for fading and emerging elites
 - Newly liberated publics lack experience with the democratic process
And/Or use their vote to enhance their share of a too small pie
 - There is a lack of stabilising traditions and institutions

There is a point here where the changing state can interface with the democratising community to produce a destabilising mix. Take the example of Russia.

The key question here is what will happen when this young, weak and highly dysfunctional state loses its chief democratiser and state founder.

We don't know of course but it may be useful to reflect on what Machiavelli had to say about this some 500 hundred years ago.

He who founds a state has a tough time acceding to the position of number 1, but it is very difficult to dislodge him. He who is destined to succeed him on the other hand has a relatively easy time acceding to the position of number 1 but a very challenging time holding onto the position.

Post-Yeltsin Russia will be a much more difficult player in European security for several reasons. It will remain too weak and fractured to mount a threat to European security, but it can become highly unstable and export that instability westwards in several forms:

- uncontrolled migration,
- environmental decay,

- disease
- wild proliferation or
- regional power grabs.

Attention has moved away from these problems in the last few years but my sense is that they are potentially still very much with us.

The second and more worrying problem is Russia's ability to play the role of a spoiler. For the foreseeable future it will not be able to shape the whole but it will still be able to align itself with states in ventures that could upset Europe's strategic applecart. The most disconcerting example that comes to mind is that of a Russian/Chinese Rapallo brought about by Mr Yeltsin's successors reacting to NATO expansion in CEE with a strategic realignment. The contours of this are already insight.

(Whether any of this happens depends much on other states' attitudes towards Russia, but I'll turn to that later.)

Another area where this kind of problem beckons in this by no means exhaustive list is the southern periphery of the Mediterranean where several longestablished state leaders, many of them having played a role as state or regime founder, can be expected to leave political life soon. This can encourage the democratisation process but also enhance instability

Dedemocratisation:

The other side of this coin is dedemocratisation, a catch all term I use to refer to the shortcomings of democracy where it has been around for a long time. This has several manifestations to it, such as the voter apathy that you can also find in democratising countries. But the basic idea is that the way we go about our political affairs in the western world has simply not kept pace with the development of the rest of society. In particular, western political backwardness translates into

- the relative lack of professionalism of the democratic politician in a world of increasing specialisation
- the weakness of the links between national political processes at a time of increasing interface across borders in almost all sectors, and
- corruption, or the buyability of the political process through the financing often non-transparent, of political parties through large socio-economic groups.

How these deficiencies manifest themselves varies enormously from country to country. All three clearly have serious implications, for domestic but also for foreign and security policy.

Let me try to illuminate the problem with one example from US politics and the impact of political party financing on American decision-making on the issue of NATO enlargement.

- Since the end of the Cold War, defence budgets have been downsized worldwide; in the US, the amount spent on procurement in 1996 is only half as much as it was ten years ago; so production lines have shrunk and there is increased competition overall.
- At the same time, weapons systems have become much more expensive to develop; for example, the F-16 fighter developed in the 1970s now costs about \$30 million; its successor presently under development could easily cost more than three times that.

- These numbers have led to enormous consolidation in the US defence industry; the number of players has been reduced and unemployment in the industry is down 45% over 10 years ago.
- To keep costs manageable, the defence industry needs to maximise economies of scale. For example, to keep the costs of the Joint Fighter Aircraft at the level of \$30 million per plane, the plan is to be built for several countries and services and have a production line of 2900 planes. The longer that production line, the lower the cost (*Economist*, 14 June 1997, "Linking Arms: A survey of the global defence industry")
- NATO enlargement is particularly interesting in this context; as NATO member countries are supposed to have interoperable equipment as far as possible, expanding the Alliance is a way of expanding production lines
- PfP participation can also encourage defence modernisation but in this flexible, ad hoc framework. there is much less peer pressure to modernise and standardise.

So the defence industry has a vested interest in NATO expansion. This is underscored for example by the fact that the Chairman of the private citizens' committee for NATO enlargement is none other than the President of Lockheed Martin, the giant of the American defence companies. Finally all this has coincided with dramatically rising political campaign costs.

It is my hypothesis that these two elements – the politicians' need for money and the defence contractors' need for long production lines came together in 1994 to produce support in both parties for Enlargement.

There are of course other elements at work in enlargement decision-making, including many good arguments for opening the alliance to new members. The problem with this however is that the decision to support enlargement was taken without a strategic debate, and once it was taken in the US, and with the existing support for the decision in Bonn, it developed a life of its own within the Alliance.

Now finally we will begin in 1988 a strategic debate that will reverberate through much of the next decade. The problem is that the enlargement cart has been put before the strategic horse – and it will be very difficult for the alliance to manage the debate under these circumstances.

My own analysis for what it is worth is that enlargement strikes out as a sensible strategic proposition on three accounts:

- Not fair as it discriminates against weaker countries and those probably needing the most support
- Not stabilising because it will at the very least complicate relations between the ins and the outs, and could end up doing much worse than that, but also
- Not necessary because the kind of security problems we face in Europe are those that can be quite adequately dealt with by the ad hoc, flexible approach embodied in Partnership for Peace.

Be that as it may, it may be that at the end of the day the pros of enlargement will really end up outweighing the cons. At the very least what we have here is an initiative of great importance for the future of Europe that was hatched without being thought through.

This is not the first time this kind of thing has happened, of course. The use of money to buy political favour has always been one of democracy's weakest points, and particularly that of the US variant. With the end of the Cold War this has become a substantially more serious problem, because we are no longer shielded from the shortcomings of sloppy strategic decision-making by the systemic stability of the Cold War and the strategic discipline that went with it.

Leadership

Let me turn now to the third faultline, that of leadership in the Euro-Atlantic community. It is tempting to believe that after the hesitations on both sides of the Atlantic in the first part of this decade, there is now a broad consensus on the need for US leadership and an equally broad preparedness on the part of the US to play that role.

I think this analysis has to be looked at with some scepticism.

The American isolationist streak is legendary, but it is not just legend, it is rooted in some fairly tough realities, that have been reinforced with the end of the Cold War.

Strategic Depth: The period of Cold War rivalry with the Soviet Union and the sense of nuclear vulnerability that accompanied it was for the US unique. With the fall of international communism and the collapse of the Soviet Union, it now again finds itself relatively unchallenged from abroad on its own territory. With the end of the Cold War, for the first time in many decades, it has been possible for the American man and woman on the street to feel that their country does not face a direct threat from another country, one requiring constant engagement in world affairs

Waning Resources: The US is still the strongest country in the world in economic and military terms but its relative position as hegemon has been declining. 50 years ago, the US generated roughly 50% of global GNP. Today the figure is more like 25%.

Domestic Focus: Like in allied countries, the overwhelming public concerns are with domestic issues and the economy. True, the economy is booming for a record fifth year. But it is a measure of the importance of the home front that one of the leading contenders for the Democratic Party nomination in the year 2000 has made protection of American jobs from the forces of globalisation a main campaign plank - and this in a country where there is even less unemployment than in Switzerland.

This has not translated into calls for the boys to come home – although I wonder if there would still be as many as 100,000 troops in Europe and US peacebuilders in Yugoslavia if the U S economy had slumped like the Japanese one over the last five years.

But it has meant that the US has been much more circumspect with its strategic resources, reducing its commitments and looking to others to pay their way and more, and even to take the lead. Witness the situation in the former Yugoslavia where the US

- was at first totally unengaged
- then, engaged itself with policies that went against the grain of those of the European countries participating in UNPROFOR
- and was only prepared to join European forces on the ground

- when the balance of forces had turned in favour of the Bosnians and Croatians
- when there was broad European support for the objective of recreating a Bosnian state, and
- when it became clear that Europeans were going to bear the major part of the burden.

The reluctant superpower

The point to be made here is that the US is not an eager but a reluctant superpower. It will lead in European affairs, not because it has no choice as in the Cold War, but because it feels the costs are reasonable and the risks seem manageable. But it may also elect not to engage in European affairs if it feels that the Europeans are not shouldering the major part of the burden. In other parts of the world, however, where there are fewer resources available for dealing with regional threats or there is less tradition of multilateral security, the Americans may be less demanding.

All this puts Europe in a difficult position.

- It is expected to do more, not a bad thing.
- It is expected to continue to fight under American generals, perhaps a necessary evil under existing circumstances but not a very good deal.
- Most seriously, it cannot assume that the world's only remaining superpower will always be there at its side in the field.

The dilemma is that there is nothing in sight that suggests that Europe will be able to generate its own leadership. At the same time, America can continue to be expected to vacillate confusingly and confusedly between neo-leadership and neo-isolationism.

So there are three questions in my view that will be decisive in determining how European security evolves in the next century:

1. Will Europe succeed in ensuring soft landings as states change, shifting competencies among aggregate levels and communities, and even reconfiguring themselves entirely?
2. Will Europe succeed in neutralising the dangers of democratisation and dedemocratisation?
3. Will Europe succeed in becoming capable of assuming substantially greater responsibility for its own security, and for that of the wider world as well?

ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

We do not know how these questions will be answered or what the future will more generally hold in store for European security in the next century.

What I would like to do to conclude is to use a methodology with you that can help deal with such uncertainties.

The basic idea is that while cannot predict the future but we can detect in the present many of the forces that will shape the future and by using them creatively we can anticipate the most likely alternative futures that may intervene.

1. Show futures graph
2. Explain driving forces:
 - I have three
 - I consolidate into two
 - I define extremes
 - I check out the quadrants for stories and give them namesShow Canada example or Korea example.
3. Spend 5 minutes thinking individually about what you think will drive Euro security
4. At end of 5 minutes, form groups of three
5. Take 15 minutes to agree on axes & names of quadrants
6. Present on viewfoil

The Euro-Atlantic Democratic Peace

Democracies are basically peaceful

Democracies' wars are just wars

Therefore create more democracies

Mature democracies have important assets

As Europe, so the world

F A U L T L I N E S

The changing state

De/democratisation

Leadership

Forces for Statal Change

decentralising technologies

decreasing importance of territory

democratisation of info' access

waning government role

internationalisation of market forces

relativised sovereignties

new frameworks for wealth creation

new loyalties

THE CHANGING STATE

statal change the norm

powerful forces now at work

transcends ethnicity

key cause of present & future security headaches

Europe's deficient crisis management capacities

21st = century of changing state

DEMOCRATISATION DANGERS

- 1. Democratising states most likely to go to war**

- 2. First years most dangerous**

- 3. Causes are structural**
 - Instrumentalisation of nationalism**
 - Public immaturity**
 - Lack of stabilising traditions and institutions**

DEDEMOCRATISATION DANGERS

- **Lack of professionalism**
- **Weak crossborder links**
- **Buyability of political process**

A US EXAMPLE

LESS \$ FOR DEFENCE

MORE EXPENSIVE WEAPONS

DEFENCE INDUSTRY DOWNSIZING

INTEREST IN LONGER PRODUCTION LINES

NATO BETTER THAN PFP FOR INTEROPERABILITY

DRAMATICALLY RISING CAMPAIGN COSTS

THE ONLY REMAINING SUPERPOWER?

Strategic Depth

Declining Hegemon

Domestic Focus

Strategic Reluctance

Europe's 21st Century Challenges

Will Europe succeed in ensuring soft landings as states change, shifting competencies among aggregate levels and communities, and even reconfiguring themselves entirely?

Will Europe succeed in neutralising the dangers of democratisation and dedemocratisation?

Will Europe succeed in becoming capable of assuming substantially greater responsibility for its own security and for that of the wider world as well?