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**Rapporteur Report**

**Cultural Dialogue in International Security:**

# The Role of Values in Counter-Insurgency and Stabilisation: Mil-Mil, Civ-Mil and 'Civ-Civ' Dialogue from the Balkans to South Asia

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## Introduction

In the complex strategic environment of the twenty-first century, cooperation between nations and actors with differing cultural background and expectations has become critical as governments seek to provide security for their voting publics. Developing mutual respect, open channels of communications and a willingness to compromise and adapt are the biggest challenges in managing security risks in a globalised world. Recognising the need for dialogue specifically in the region of south Asia, Chatham House has taken this important step by inviting policy makers, experts, 'cultural activists' and military leaders for a roundtable on 6th September 2011 to share their experiences and learn from one another in an open dialogue on the role of values and culture in recent wars.

Entitled 'The Role of Values in Counter-Insurgency and Stabilisation: Mil-Mil, Civ-Mil and'Civ-Civ' Dialogue from the Balkans to South Asia', the roundtable formed the second event in a project whose central aim is to provide a neutral forum in which policy makers can explore solutions to strategic challenges in an increasingly complex environment. The need for such a framework is patently evident in the region of south Asia, an area considered to be a point of failure of transatlantic security policies in the last decade. With a view toward breaking through barriers and misconceptions regarding Western engagement in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and with the need for 'straight, honest talk', participants engaged in a debate on the future of the region and the need for cross-cultural dialogue.

## A view from Pakistan

One participant highlighted the cognitive dissonance between declarations of President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair that there should be 'no more failed states', on the one hand, and the enduring reality that Afghanistan (and potentially Pakistan) remains to be a failed state, on the other. This is partly because the West engaged in conflicts with no plan for local governance. In Afghanistan, the CIA empowered the warlords as an alternative power structure to the government. There was no governance, no government services and no effort to talk to the enemy. This was certainly the case in the initial US involvement in Pakistan. As several participants argued, it is not possible to bring democracy and development into the midst of an insurgency, particularly when the occupying troops contributed toward greater insecurity. DIFD, USAID and other organisations were absent in the development efforts. Civilians did not want to go into a war zone. The

commentator maintained that the West fell into these traps because of ignorance and a failure to listen to the people on the ground. Nation-building, according to the speaker, is about institutions. Democracy must not be the first step for nation-building. It is necessary to address the economic foundations that enable the population to lead normal lives: for example, there was no electricity in Kabul for eight years and the economy in Afghanistan is largely unsustainable. When the West leaves, unemployment will soar creating an opportunity for the Taliban to step in. Long-term economic development is in the US Army's counter-insurgency manual, but it is not applied on the ground. Neither are the night-raids compatible with the 'winning hearts and minds' campaign. This duality has led to a loss of trust and credibility which undermines any nation-building plans that have been proposed. State-building needs institutions, but so far the West has only built up the army. What about the bureaucracy and the justice system which are needed to hold up the state post-withdrawal? Nation-building is anchored in cohesion and socio-economic, cultural and political identity a decade on. These structures are missing in Afghanistan and need to be addressed in a cultural context in which the West engages with the Taliban.

Dialogue, however, is extremely difficult because the war has superseded everything else. A reduction of violence has to be the strategic aim, bringing the Taliban to the table, in order for the West to leave the country 'without being shot at as the last man closes the door'. The critical question becomes: how do you translate these initiatives into a sustainable and constructive dialogue? The Taliban are ready to negotiate a power-sharing deal. Confidence-building measures (CBM) have been very successful, prisoners have been released and the Taliban have been removed from some terrorist lists. The next step should be a military CBM on the ground in Pakistan, but this would demand a massive paradigm shift from Western political leaders – which means President Obama. Also the military will need to swallow some of its pride and facilitate the political process. There is still time to lay down the foundations for an indigenous economy and tools of governance but this cannot be carried out with the current levels of violence. A mutual reduction in violence is imperative, but the United States does not appear to be serious about this peace process: no major changes in its military policy towards Pakistan were made in the recent past. Pakistan is a key ally in this initiative, but has been ignored by the United States and its coalition. A dialogue therefore is necessary in a wider context that considers what is meaningful for both the Afghans and the Pakistanis, with both parties contributing toward a flexible but sustainable framework.

## From Bosnia to Helmand: Lessons Learned from developing and implementing the 'Comprehensive Approach' in waging 'war among the peoples'

The first panel on 'lessons learned' concentrated on the implementation of the 'comprehensive approach' in the wars in Afghanistan and Libya, and on the cultural initiatives that have been developed in previous conflicts – in particular in the Balkans. The overall consensus seemed to indicate that cooperation between military and civilian actors is currently insufficient to reach the final objectives of peace-building and ending the war. Nonetheless, in order to address these shortcomings, what is of critical importance in armed conflict is to foster a proper understanding of the socio-economic, political and cultural needs of local populations through improved collaboration with politicians, actors on the ground, military leaders and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are .

One speaker focused on the particular case of the Arghandab District in Afghanistan to highlight the confused chain of command, overlapping networks and lack of cooperation between the many actors on the ground. There are approximately 80,000 Afghans in Arghandab, predominantly made up of the Alakozai Pashtun tribe. This area was an object of US 'soft power' in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s. The area is considered to be one of the most fertile agricultural regions in Afghanistan, and significant investments were made in the past. Although the Arghandab District produces some of the best fruit in the region, this produce cannot find its way to a market. Two years ago, the United States returned to the area, investing heavily in two Alakozai individuals, a chief of police and a district governor. Millions were poured into this initiative, but the project was a failure. According to the speaker, the problem was governance: the entire traditional structure of the tribes has been decimated after thirty years of war. The speaker maintained that powerful individuals, motivated by personal interest and opportunism are ruling according to the 'three Ps' of politics, patronage and power. The two individuals, who were propped up by the United States, had no chance to enact federal policies because they were in the hands of a powerful warlord who led patronage networks by 'owning' officials and subsequently diverting 90% of USAID funds. A deeper socio-political analysis showed that, although the population was mostly Alakozai, they were also further split into different competing factions. This highlights the need of having a comprehensive understanding of the tribal structure which is necessary to find the 'right' Afghan leadership and to build an inclusive and representative government. Prudent and incremental expenditure is also to be favoured over huge investments, as small quantities used in the right way were found to be more

effective to incentivise certain political behaviour. As one commentator affirmed, all these actors should focus on the output, not the input. They should try to agree upfront on what is the nature of the problem- generally politics. They also need to understand the political situation on the ground: for local awareness and cultural intelligence are of paramount importance. What has been termed 'co-location' helps in forcing integration and cooperation between various actors. The 'comprehensive approach' can only be successful if there is consolidated leadership, and finally, the tactical objectives on the ground must be subject to an agreed political strategy, a marked lack of which has been an enduring feature of the conflict in Afghanistan and of US engagement with Pakistan.

The perspectives and experiences of NGOs was laid out by several speakers who argued that a comprehensive approach is not all about politics, but also about cultural relations. According to one speaker, initiatives aimed at fostering confidence through cultural activities appear to have made some headway. NGOs in Afghanistan focus on the civil society level, and in particular on fostering an intellectual elite. Rather than looking for quick solutions, they invest in long-term projects that are having a lasting impact. In this regard, access to communication channels is especially important, including public forums to express opinions and artistic expressions. This is recognised by the European Parliament, individual governments and NGOs that have come together to work towards cultural development and integration in multi-ethnic communities in areas of conflict. This process fosters peace-building and is aimed at preventing a return to conflict. As one speaker argued, dialogue does not happen by itself once the guns are silenced: rather, a continued investment in fostering cultural dialogue is essential. For example, a project funded by the European Community Enlargement Fund has focused on the forgotten historical monuments that were built under Ottoman rule in south-east Europe. Although more than half of these monuments have been destroyed, the project leaders are convinced that a shared history can bring communities together. As part of this project, a literary initiative was established with a book that confronts the different experiences of war, which has since been translated into nine languages. As the speaker highlighted, cultural organisations are using this approach to foster a mutual and shared 'South-East' identity which is aimed at encouraging mutual tolerance and understanding between the different peoples of the region.

So, what lessons have we learned from Bosnia to Helmand with regard to the Western 'war machine' and the role of culture? Many policy-makers continue

to assert that they have learned the lessons of the past. In some cases, they have, and great progress has been achieved, but many challenges still remain. Libya offers itself as a case study: there have been no foreign troops on the ground and a doctrine of constrained interventionism seems to have emerged. According to one commentator, there are three categories of lessons to be learnt: how to start a war; how to run a war; and how to end a war. There is no consensus on how to start a war, a broad consensus on how to run a war but very little bureaucratic willingness, and again broad consensus on how to end a war but very little political willingness. Conflicts are chosen to build the argument in favour or against intervention, the speaker maintained, but different policy-makers and researchers can reach different conclusions. There is little consensus, even fewer lessons, and certainly a dearth of fixed doctrines. The speaker voiced a belief, however, that the West must fight for its values against barbarism, justifying an apparent consensus for why to start a war.

With regard to the second question, 'how to run a war', we have seen various approaches to civil-military relations. Until Bosnia, there was limited civil-military cooperation and only in Kosovo were funds attributed for institutionalised cooperation between humanitarian actors and troops on the ground. The intervention in Sierra Leone may be a success story in terms of the implementation of civil-military relations, but only in Afghanistan in 2005 was there a genuine appreciation for civil-military cooperation where governments came together in an integrated fashion to create bureaucratic or administrative units. The speaker argued that increased attention and funding for missions focusing on failing states have only emerged since 2006. In the UK, there was a greater process for joint operations to strategise and create a single plan for engagement under the renewed parliamentary mechanisms of oversight. This allowed the British to heed more of the lessons of past engagements.

The speaker outlined eight lessons that decision-makers should take to heart as the Libyan intervention unfolded: 1) assume the worst; 2) military might is able to achieve many things but must eventually be replaced by politics; 3) be aware of your friends and foes and acknowledge that they might wear several 'hats'; 4) beware of the civil service. Upper echelons of bureaucracy are not able to deal with the challenge of warfare and post-conflict stabilisation; 5) be clear of inflection points that allow for a review of policies; 6) a small force of dissidents can create havoc in any situation; 7) success depends on them, not on you. Real stability comes from communities themselves, although international efforts can incentivise strong leadership. Finally, be realistic: you

have less time than you think you have, less money than you would like to have, and far less legitimacy in the eyes of the people that you engage with, and in the end, this is for the best. Despite the changes since 2005, the speaker argued that the United Kingdom is still not well placed to deliver in war: there is a mismatch in their resources and their ambitions. There is a huge misallocation of fund between the military and the civilian agencies and between post-crisis response and pre-conflict resolution. The UK government still suffers from the disease of departmentalism making collaboration difficult. There is still a lack of 'professionalisation' on the civilian part, particularly with regards to training of personnel. Last but not least, the system has been very slow to adapt, and in fact very few lessons have actually been learnt. To conclude, the United Kingdom has never ended a war, so no lessons can be learnt from how to end a war.

The first panel concluded with some key questions and divergences on the definition of 'the West', the relationship between culture and politics and the reconfiguration of the armed forces. The need to enhance the culture of remembering was stressed by one commentator, whereas a focus on political culture was judged to be missing by another participant. It was suggested that the vocabulary used by the 'West' was Anglo-Saxon-centric and that culture was not more important than 'Realpolitik', which is equally a part of national identity. A question was asked about the role of China in Afghanistan and Pakistan, to which the speaker replied that China is expected to act on self-interest in Afghanistan. No cash is provided freely by Beijing, and project aid support is linked to its own interests. An expectation that China will replace the United States in Pakistan or in Afghanistan is unrealistic. One speaker went so far as to argue that China does not 'play politics' like the West, and that, if anything, Beijing is interested mainly in the exploitation of natural resources. In recognition of the importance of cultural dialogue and sensitivity, participants in the panel wholly agreed upon the need for local ownership of such programmes.

## Securing Afghanistan for the Afghans? From a Strategy of COIN to 'mil-mil' and 'civ-mil' dialogue on the ground

Later in the day, participants in a panel explored the realities of the conflict in Afghanistan and the organisation and perceived role of the Taliban from a multi-disciplinary approach, bringing together academic perspectives, military and NGO experience, and political expertise from the country in question. One participant discussed a parallel between the experiences in Liberia in 2004 and the reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan.

One commentator argued that techniques employed by ISAF troops have altered the organisational structure of the Taliban. Night raids in particular have had a nation-wide impact. By 2010, ISAF changed strategies and decided to concentrate its military efforts on a few key areas. This resulted in putting the Taliban on the defensive and destabilised the organisation. The Taliban had to adapt to the new environment. Although militarily they were remarkably resilient and successful, especially when considering the threats they were facing, their popularity and influence have declined significantly overall. This is particularly the case in parts of the South where local Taliban governors and militarily commanders had been successfully targeted by Special Forces. The response by the Taliban was to rotate governors and commanders around different regions, making them easier to replace (if assassinated) without the Taliban losing face or looking weak. On the other hand, this initiative is also proving costly for the insurgents as many of their officials no longer have connections to the local population, nor can they negotiate with the communities.

On a political level, the Taliban have centralised their organisation while developing a top-level leadership in its bureaucracy. The constant application of violence, however, in particular the use of IEDs, has further contributed to alienating the population from the Taliban. On the side of the West though, nobody has capitalised on the loss of popularity of the Taliban! On the contrary, one participant argued that both ISAF and the Taliban are on a downwards spiral in terms a loss of local credibility and reputation. While it can be argued that ISAF has been gaining ground militarily since 2010, the popular consensus is that there will be no government presence in Afghanistan when the Taliban is pushed out.

Finally, the Taliban have modernised as a bureaucratic organisation under the influence of Pakistan, while the Afghan government is as weak as ever – despite the tactical successes of ISAF. The role of civil agencies and NGOs appears to be irrelevant as long as there is insecurity and development funds do not reach their destination. All the actors in the conflict are in favour of a settlement, but they approach this settlement in different ways that are at odds with one another. The Taliban want to negotiate with the government, but without the United States' interference. The US, however, does not trust the Afghan government, and the Afghan government in turn does not want to seem redundant. This creates a complex environment in which negotiations are never easy and highlight the cultural dimension of playing politics in conflict zones.

A 'culture and conflict' project was presented by one speaker as a counterpart to the military tactics and strategies that are being deployed on the ground. Speaking the same language and sharing a common understanding of military values and culture and 'civ-mil' and 'mil-mil' relations are important in order to coordinate a military intervention on foreign territory. Culture is not just about soft power, however. By looking at traditional culture in the arts, we can find a strong intersection with education, health care, but also military strategy and defence. This relates to how resources are spent and the politics of funding is about 'convincing one another'. Funding for culture, though, is always the first to go when budgets are being slashed because its tangible impact is still not broadly recognised by the international community. Cultural activities can inform people about places in ways that sources cannot. Culture wins hearts and minds – indeed it is great PR! Culture is also central to a return to normality, regardless of the conflict in question or state of insurgency. It is the way people survive and express themselves in these challenging times. The participant maintained that culture is also the bedrock of civil society and is manifested in terms of institutions, whether education, arts, human or women's rights and so forth.

A cycle of plays entitled 'The Great Game' showcase the historical and cultural experiences of Afghanistan in a series of twelve plays of one hour each. These plays are based on verbatim interviews and were requested for a private performance by the Pentagon who recognised the value of this initiative for what has been termed 'upstream capacity building'. In such a way, cultural preparation goes beyond military strategy to reach local communities without alienating the population. According to the commentator, poor linguistic preparation of the Western military force illustrates the lack of engagement in Afghanistan: the British Embassy found that in Kabul only two people spoke Dari and nobody spoke Pashtu – out of the huge number of staff posted in the country. By remaining narrowly focused on their military efforts, the West missed many opportunities to break cultural boundaries: The Afghan TV talent show attracts 10 million viewers, or one third of the country. This is spectacular in a country where only 4 out of 10 people own a television. A new generation of media moguls demonstrates the potential for local ownership and translation of Western programmes through the conduit of television – in particular the popularity of the Afghan 'Pop Idol.' This is an excellent thermometer for changing tastes in Afghanistan, yet this trend has so far been entirely overlooked by Western analysts. The speaker emphasised that we need to learn from these tools and initiatives. The example of 'Turquoise Mountain' was cited as an outstanding initiative for heritage conservation that attracted substantial funds. This was a visionary

transformation of a slum into an extraordinarily preserved area of historical architecture. The project encouraged skills development through creating jobs particularly in the arts and crafts. 'Turquoise' has reduced its external staff from 25 to 9 which is a big success since NGOs tend to keep ownership of the project and perpetuate their presence. Some obvious moves to improve cultural awareness, the speaker concluded, are to learn languages and appreciate the cultural heritage of the country.

The potential for 'mil-mil' dialogue were explored in Liberia where private contractors were hired in 2004 by the United States to develop security sector reform (SSR) and build-up the legitimacy of the national armed forces of this 'small country with big problems'. Once considered the jewel of Africa (in 1974, it had twice the GDP of India), Liberia's prosperity came to an end in 1989 when civil war was initiated by the rebel Charles Taylor. During their engagement in the country, the private security company, DynCorp, experienced a clash of values not only with the local armed forces and the government, but also with Washington, who had contracted their services.

The 'mil-mil' engagement was not just about the transfer of military skills but also about transferring the soldiers' values, such as serving the rule of law, and the sharing the credo of a professional army. There were substantial differences in the military culture of the Liberian army and the private security firm. Gender, and in particular the role of women in institutionalised violence, was a point of contention, as the Liberians had a history of female warlords and required their military to be open and integrated, to which the US army was at first opposed. The agent of the SSR was not the United States but a company, DynCorp. This is possibly the first time that a private company is hired to boost up the defence system of a country since the British East India Company over two centuries ago. This does lead, however, to a problem of transparency and accountability as DynCorp's contracts were with Washington, not with the Liberian ministries. Decisions were sometimes made by Washington and presented to the Liberians as a 'fait accompli' without room for compromise or negotiations. SSR and DDR (disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration) are political, not just technical processes, and require a culturally sensitive approach.

Security and development are generally mutually buttressing although at times a trade-off must be made. For example, when DynCorp created a vetting process for military recruits, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission attempted to gain access to private information that could have damaged the credibility of the company, and potentially endangered the lives of the people who had shared sensitive information. DynCorp refused to cooperate, despite

the political pressure that was exerted on them. Furthermore, China and America present alternative models of infrastructure, and this needs to be recognised when operating on the ground. Local ownership and developing local capacity is also an important aspect of SSR. An example of this is the high level of illiteracy among the military. DynCorp attempted to integrate reading education into the military training of the new Liberian troops at the expense of rifle training, but this was overturned by the US government. Doctrines of security are not universally appropriate. The Liberians created a white paper that focused on human security and the failures of development, even though this was not the perception in Washington. In conclusion, the speaker argued that there is a need for humility and a need to listen rather than to dictate, and finally, lessons that were learned in Liberia can be applied in Afghanistan.

Returning to the case of Afghanistan, one speaker declared that the country has fundamentally changed in the last two years, and the West's analysis [of the region] is 'positively outdated'. The US army has had a positive cultural effect, as evidenced in the ancient Zoroastrian celebrations that took place for the first time since the toppling of the Taliban in October 2011. Cross-cultural dialogue must address perceived competing norms and values, particularly in the areas of justice and accountability. The commentator posited that Afghanistan has been a laboratory and a battleground for cultural concepts and prejudice. An informed reading of Afghan history and society would have created a better partnership between the country and the coalition armies. The participant highlighted a prejudiced view of Afghans as dishonest, which has led to nearly 2/3 of reconstruction contracts attributed to foreigners, stripping the community of local ownership.

The Taliban are currently being perceived by the US as a viable component for a future government, but the speaker does not believe that this organisation is open to negotiations. There is no consensus on the perceived role of the Taliban - are they a legitimate actor, or are they pure evil? In fact, commentator argued, the Taliban are an ideological movement, rather than a neatly-defined ethnic group or proxy of Pakistan. They have access to ideological infrastructures, 60% of which goes through the Mosques, a sophisticated well-organised political organisation, sanctuaries in Pakistan and Iran, good access to funding, and a conducive social environment due to the current vacuum in governance in Afghanistan. There is inconsistency in the West's political approach towards the country and its multiple actors that has been informed by prejudice rather than experience or knowledge. A principle of solidarity must direct the community of nations in their

involvement in Afghanistan. Mutual accountability for past, present and future foreign involvement must be addressed while also allowing the Afghans to take responsibility for their country. The importance of Islam and its values also deserve recognition. Corruption, in Islam, is perceived as a form of injustice, while good governance and justice are fundamental to the faith. The notion of forgiveness and reconciliation in the religion equally give hope that Afghanistan's civil conflict can reach a peaceful resolution. In conclusion, the speaker argued that the discourse of intercultural dialogue must empower all local communities for Afghanistan to become a beacon of peaceful co-existence between people of different cultures and faiths.

## Lessons from the East: A Holistic Approach to Managing Conflict

The third panel began with an exploration of political culture in nation-building and managing conflict. A parallel was made between Libya and India in a context of civil violence and insurgencies. In the past, India has faced five major insurgencies, and has been able to resolve all of them except for Kashmir, for which it needs Pakistan's help. These insurgencies have lasted between 7 and 26 years depending on the region. The speaker reviewed the common elements of India's strategies for overcoming insurgencies: the Indian state always offered a peaceful option to the insurgents as an alternative for them to reach their political goals. The army was used in vast quantities, but was deployed strategically: in Punjab, although there were never more than 500 militants at any time, forces managed to tie down 350,000 of the country's police force and military. Likewise, the militants in Kashmir have not exceeded 1500 men, but have managed to keep up the fight for over 20 years.

The speaker argued that European nations cannot imagine this kind of commitment. A massive military commitment is necessary to lift fear off the population and to allow normal life to continue. It is essential to maintain popular support for the government and encourage economic growth. In Kashmir, every single road is patrolled by fully armed soldiers and sniffers, and the region has one the highest growth rates in India, despite the on-going conflict. The army is also tasked with building relationships with local populations.

One major difference between Western involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan and India engagement in Kashmir is the nature of the federal constitutions that the West drafted for in the former two states. Afghanistan has 34 districts, whereas Iraq has 18 regions, and both have political mechanisms to support

devolution of power, and finally a national assembly. In India, on the other hand, nation-building is based on the accommodation and integration of ethnicities. A second distinctive element of the Indian experience with insurgents is that the state has never treated the insurgent leaders as criminals and New Delhi has never sought to destroy their adversary, recognising their ultimate importance in negotiating peace and building the state.

Finally, the speaker posited, what if Taliban fighters had been left to their own devices and the West had instead focused on federalism through massive aid and investment into the country? The warlords would have found themselves facing elected officials in their territories. Although some would have won the local elections, most would have lost and the winners would have been transformed and incorporated into the new government. The commentator argued that the West made Kabul utterly impotent, and then blamed the government for being corrupt. Moreover, the speaker posited that the US surge in Afghanistan has forced the militarisation of the Taliban, and weakened the political control of the government. Reflecting upon such weakness at the centralised level, the speaker argued that it would be desirable for the West to take a leaf out of India's experiences and vie for ethnically-based federalism in Afghanistan. Likewise, a parallel can be drawn with the operation in Libya, in which the west could have isolated Gaddafi by offering ethnic federalism in Libya instead of removing the mercurial leader through military intervention.

By recalling the insurgent attack on the British Council in Kabul on 19 August 2011, the second panellist highlighted the role culture is playing in the conflict. It was the first time in history that the Council had been targeted deliberately by a terrorist group and its employees were literally 'hunted to death'. The British Council was perceived as a threat because it stands for particular values and is attempting to bring into the country cultural changes that are in opposition to the beliefs of the Taliban. Rebuilding universities, encouraging girls to go to school, and working with the National Museum are some of the cultural activities in which the British have been involved in Afghanistan.

According to a UN study, 80% of today's conflicts have a cultural values-based dimension. India, Russia and China have recognised the importance of culture and have entered the 'game' of spreading culture. India, for instance, has opened twenty new cultural centres in Mexico in the past year. Certainly in the past, the Western cultural model has dominated the world; and yet in reflecting upon these alternative models, the speaker posited that Euro-Atlantic societies must be clear about their values, and accordingly be

prepared to listen to others. A neutral position of 'openness' and 'curiosity' is the way forward to create 'safe spaces' for dialogue for people with different views. Furthermore, 'safe conversation' commences in areas in which young people care about will encourage a sharing of cultural narratives. Such engagement is promoted by various organisations in Kabul and has already been quite successful in sustaining public support in Afghanistan, despite the violent attacks of the Taliban.

As a speaker highlighted, a 'view from the East' implies the existence of a dichotomy between the military, philosophical and political values of the West and the East. These differences, according to the panellist, are subtle and grounded in culture. An awareness of one's own political and strategic culture is an important starting power when analysing conflict management. Political conflict translates itself into a perceived attack on human dignity and inspires deep emotional responses. Immanuel Kant stated that humans possess moral and political reason and that they should treat themselves and others as an end rather than as a means. The German philosopher considered dignity to be priceless, as it remained embodied in a person's identity and culture. This dignity is linked to the past through collective memory, and to the present in the way that people interact with each other. The nature of political relations in turn affects dignity. Humiliation is therefore defined as the emotional manifestation of the absence of dignity. It is the emotion that inspired Hitler to mobilise the population.

The speaker argued that Western and Eastern conflict management differ in styles because of their experiences with – and expression of – dignity. In the West, conflict resolution must satisfy both parties, can be reached through consensus, and is framed by existing laws. Conflict, in turn, is not viewed as a negative to be avoided but instead is necessary for progress in changing power relations. In the East, conflict resolution aims to restore the social order and destructive balances of power. It involves entire communities, not just individuals. The preservation of relationships is therefore essential in dispute resolution to prevent an escalation of conflict. Conflict is generally seen as negative and disruptive to the established order; therefore it needs to be resolved quickly. In eastern societies, one speaker argued, 'storytelling' takes precedence over statements of facts, and power is given to individuals instead of institutions, although face-to-face bargaining can be perceived as a humiliating ordeal. The Western conflict management approach negotiates on interests rather than on values: furthermore, the West focuses on the individual, whereas the East prioritises the collective.

There is also a greater emphasis in the East on conflict resolution based on retribution, compensation, and forgiveness. Western foreign policy has been driven by economic and strategic interests in a guise of values. The double standards and inconsistencies in the West's behaviour are widely recognised by the rest of the world. It is the primary reason that, even when the West acts for in the name of promoting values, its motives remain suspect. One commentator suggested that the West needs to understand humility and face uncomfortable truths, in particular in its responses to the Arab Spring, where suddenly workshops of democracy and human rights are being offered in places which the West previously ignored. This does not mean that the West does not have a concept of honour or dignity. But Western states have used enormous levels of violence to protect themselves against attacks.

The experience of much of the global East and global South is one of violent intrusion by the West, which is the cause of the misunderstanding and mistrust between both sides. Recent history, particularly in Afghanistan, indicates that when Western interests are satisfied, their commitment ceases. For this reason, among others, Muslim governments are encouraged to deal with their problems internally, rather than allow Western intervention or interference. Sanctions against Iraq in the 1990s cause hundreds of thousands of deaths, which Madeleine Albright considered 'worth it'. A poor cultural understanding of both the military and cultural leadership has driven a wedge between the West, on one side, and the insurgents and people of Afghanistan, on the other. The United Kingdom and the United States commanded wars that were initiated by political leaders who refused to listen to civil servants. There is a poor cultural understanding both between countries and among the countries' political agents. The UK, the US and Afghanistan share a common allergy to external meddling in their internal affairs, which has contributed to this prolonged war and a disproportionate amount of civilian deaths on the Afghan side. The speaker quoted a passage from the Koran to illustrate his argument: 'when it is said 'make not mischief on the earth', they say 'why, we only want to make peace!''. In conclusion, the West must know itself, and understand how its actions are being interpreted by others.

## The end of Euro-Atlantic Defence, and the Future of International Security: Where to from here?

The provocative title 'the end of Euro-Atlantic Defence' attracted different interpretations. One analysis focused on the changing role of NATO due to the shift from a world of threats to a world of risks. A threshold concerning

various types of risks determines whether the international community chooses or not to act on the risk. Terrorist training centres in Afghanistan, for example, were judged to be too high a risk to accept. According to one speaker, human rights are an objectively described concept that emerged from the European intellectual traditions of the Enlightenment and are legally codified. Human rights presuppose individual responsibility, the separation of religion from politics, gender equality, multi-party systems, rights to election, the rule of law and so forth. These human rights played a key political role in foreign policy from the Carter administration and South African Apartheid and especially after the end of the Cold War. Stronger conditionality linked to the protection of human rights is now required for development aid. Human rights are an identifiable value-basis for foreign policy and in particular foreign intervention. The UN Security Council increasingly ties intervention to development and human rights. Europeans, however, will no longer contribute military power to new operations. Libya was the exception and somewhat unexpected, but after Afghanistan, Europeans have war fatigue.

Furthermore, the US has also given up the idea of being the world's policeman, whereas the Europeans are not motivated to intervene on their own. Since the end of the Cold War, Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 is no longer relevant. Today the alliance of NATO is more important than ever before: the organisation was created to 'keep the Americans in', and to guarantee burden-sharing in establishing global and regional security.

At present NATO needs to address non-existential threats. Domestic politics take precedence over security policy when there is no existential threat, but today's risks are global in scope and no longer simply local. European countries are not interested in contributing and taking risks to fight non-existential conflicts. This is a function of the two-level game in NATO – on the one hand to satisfy Washington, and on the other to address domestic demands. In the future there will be very little willingness to participate in operations such as ISAF in which forces are tied down for over a decade.

There will be very little imperialist policy ahead; instead there is a return to the 'let-them-fight' mentality in which war is avoided due to risk aversion and a lack of commitment from the international community. Yet the EU, NATO and Western countries in general remain keen to promote human rights, humanitarian intervention, principles such as the 'Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and institutions such as the ICC. Security politics is about the rules of the game, and 'rules are all we've got'. The speaker concluded that NATO countries will have to engage in humanitarian interventions nonetheless, R2P

is not going to disappear and what is an operational engagement one day may end up being an existential one.

According to another speaker, European leadership is not dead, as evidenced in its successful, albeit limited, intervention in Libya. The US supported air strikes and shared intelligence, effectively ‘leading from behind’ and achieving a strategic goal in the area without putting any boots on the territory of another Muslim country. Europeans might favour taking the lead in countries that are within their traditional sphere of influence. This was the case in Libya where the European policy-makers were better able to mobilise popular support from their constituents since they could argue that a proximate territorial or ideological threat existed. This implies that there will be less ‘global NATO’ in the future. Only 1/3 of NATO allies were involved in Libya, along with a coalition of non-member states including Qatar, the UAE, Sweden and Morocco. NATO functioned more as an institutional facilitator than a command centre, and this may well be the future of the Alliance. In the second decade of this century, NATO has fewer resources to pursue actual threats, having squandered most of its resources running after hyped-up threats. This, however, is good news according to the speaker, as interventions will have to be more intelligent and focused, using ‘brain over brawn’. Defence will have to be ‘on the cheap’, with strategic targets rather than the ‘total package’ of current military operations. This suggests, for example, an increased emphasis on Special Operations Forces. Restoring relationships, trust and cooperation between nations is equally a key factor of diplomacy and conflict prevention. In the Gulf of Eden, for instance, naval patrols have not prevented high-jacking, whereas no ship carrying an armed guard has been attacked successfully.

There have been different perceptions on the legitimate use of force, with the BRIC countries accusing NATO of exceeding its mandate in the conflict in Libya. Gaddafi suffered from a lack of support from the Arab world, and had no great power backing him up. Proxy wars have been relatively painless for NATO, but what happens, asked the speaker, when one side is supported by one of the rising powers? Furthermore, where are the rising powers, such as China and Russia, moving towards? One concern may be that great powers are threatened by medium powers who are gaining access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD), to which an answer might be a NATO coalition against WMDs. In conclusion, NATO is facing a world which does not allow the luxury of chasing inflated threats, and there is an every tighter margin for strategic error.

The future of NATO, according to another speaker, is pessimistic. The operations in Libya has shown that Europe has a dim and dismal future and that NATO is no longer a serious threat and thus should not be in the business of war. The British and the French went to war without a strategy, with the politicians setting policy and expecting the generals to execute it. This is against Clausewitz's claim that the generals have a right to tell the politicians whether their objectives are realistic. Sarkozy and Cameron have been lucky in Libya, so far. The Europeans, however, were entirely dependent on US ammunition, and were overstretched by the military operation, which will probably be the last for most countries, including the Danes and Swedes. The big powers were not included in this intervention: neither Germany, nor Turkey, nor Poland were involved. Kosovo and Libya were both European wars, not NATO wars, and the US did 80 percent of the fighting in Kosovo.

Peace and liberation have not been achieved in Libya however. Contrary to Cameron's beliefs, the Libyan rebels did not liberate themselves as there would have been no liberation without NATO. Now the coalition has a responsibility to carry out its mandate, and cannot walk away. There will be NATO boots on the ground if things go wrong. The next question is 'whither the West'? The European Union is desperate for US cooperation for a trade and an environmental agreement. This has failed because of America's dysfunctional political culture in which the president and congress cannot 'get their act together'. In turn, the US desperately wants the European Union to play a greater role in security and defence, but the EU countries are unable to reach an agreement among the member states. In conclusion, the Libyan operation is of no relevance when it comes to strategy. Tripoli is not an existential threat and it, along with Iraq and Afghanistan, has been a war of choice. What happens when there is no longer a choice? According to the speaker, the US will discover that there is no 'West' and hopefully NATO will no longer fight any further wars.

In response to these diverging views on the future role of NATO, one commentator contested that, although there is no longer a 'West', the European powers were still capable of 'smart defence on the cheap'. EU cooperation on homeland security and the success of FRONTEX have shifted the definition of security from external to internal. That being said, the US recognises that the EU relationship is fundamental to its security as a whole. Financial reasons were cited for the decrease in expeditionary impulses from larger states. Regarding the intervention in Afghanistan, one participant suggested that there were two occupying empires, one reluctant, and one

pretentious. Nonetheless, there appears to be a consensus that the West is no longer the norm-setter. Indeed, this vacuum raises the question of 'who runs this town?' and how to deter terrorists in a Hobbesian state of degenerative governance without resorting to violence. Finally, the roles of private diplomacy and the influence of the media were put forth as potential soft power alternatives to NATO's future interventions.

## Concluding Address

It was said of the Bourbon as they returned from the Napoleonic wars that they had learned nothing and forgotten nothing. The three key themes of the conference were security, culture and dialogue. Regardless of the value that we bring to culture, power and realpolitik seems to supersede dialogue. Security is part of a realm of power, but it is not only about power. 'Liberal thought' and realist political philosophies also concern themselves with the ethical application of the use of force. Montesquieu said that nations should do in peace the most good to one another and in war the least harm. Realpolitik is neither the only version nor the best version of politics.

Culture, on the other hand, is not by definition a good thing, and there are both positive and negative consequences to culture. On the question of universal versus relative values, the speaker claimed that all cultures are hybrid. Culture is neither Western nor Eastern nor at all homogenous. Human rights, for example, are hugely contested throughout the world. Alastair McIntyre famously states that 'believing in human rights is on a par with believing in witches and unicorns'. Michael Walter explains that most people operate within both thick and thin culture; a definition of freedom, for instance, is 'up to each society' and does not need to be coherent across different cultures. Nevertheless, a bit of humility would not be out of order in all cases. The term 'liberal' has been swung around generically but appears to have no consistent meaning in Western culture. The notion of dialogue is also worthy of attention. In ancient languages there was no word for culture. The word itself comes from *cultura* which means to cultivate. On the other hand, the notion of dialogue does have a classical origin: in Ancient Greek, *dialogos* designates something specific. According to Aristotle, dialogue in rhetoric is absolutely central to what he considers as political science. Rhetoric is precisely a dialogue applied to particular contexts – who are the partners, how is it conducted, and what can be expected from this dialogue? An analogy was made to the Babble Fish in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. This little fish is inserted into the ear and instantly translates everything that has been said.

Total understanding, however, is neither sufficient nor always desirable: it is best to have dialogue. In the context of the dialogues we have, there are different forms that centre on norms, values and cultures. To conclude, the consensus remains that security is about minimising or emphasising risks, and these in turn are a matter of uncertainty. Discussion on security, culture and dialogue is ultimately about how we should live, and this is the overarching theme of Chatham House's workshop on cultural dialogue in international security.