International Security Programme Workshop Summary

European Security and Defence: Lessons from the Last Decade

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Introduction

The last decade has provided policy-makers, analysts and experts of international and European security and defence with some difficult lessons. The attack on the US in 2001 served as a reminder that even the most powerful state in the international system is not impervious to emerging threats. In its reaction, the US led two military interventions, which still provoke significant debate in Europe and beyond. The enemy has been an amorphous one – global terrorism. However towards the end of the decade the Russian-Georgian war reminded Europeans of the existence of more traditional territorial conflicts and the prominence of Russia in European security.

In this new decade European security and defence is yet again at a crossroads. On the one hand, Bin Laden’s death and the Arab Spring seem to suggest a move towards a world that is becoming a safer and more stable place. On the other hand, the crises in Libya and Syria seem to indicate that the question of military intervention will remain a pressing one. Libya in particular demonstrated that Europe has not developed a common approach to its role as a collective military actor. To complicate things further, European security and defence has faced the pressing needs unprecedented austerity, as the deep economic crisis has hit many European Union (EU) states hard.

The 21st century seems to be witnessing a transformation of the international system. New centres of power are emerging, pushing the system away from a predominantly unipolar period towards a new multipolar phase. This new international order seems to promise increased levels of uncertainty in all spheres, and especially security and defence. Understanding the emerging poles will be a crucial process for Europeans and their allies in order to attain security in this new order.

The fifth workshop of the European Security and Defence Forum addressed these crucial issues for Europe and brought together a distinguished array of participants from policy, industry and academia to evaluate the last decade, with a view to better inform and guide future policy. A considerable part of the discussion focused on the lessons that it was felt had not been learnt, some of the recurring themes in European foreign policy including terrorism, power shifts, strategy and Afghanistan. The discussants analysed these in order to put forward proposals geared at maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of interventions, improving counterterrorism strategies, as well as evaluating
new strategies for the UK, Europe and its security institutions with a view to addressing the changing international dynamics.

**Changing International Dynamics and Global Multipolarity**

The discussion began with a look at the need to develop a coherent European strategy for the 21st century. It was argued that when times are good, the risks tend to be forgotten but when times are more difficult the need for managing and addressing those risks becomes more pressing. There was a widespread consensus that Europe is entering an era of mounting unpredictability. Today, Europe may lack a clear existential threat, but the international system is less stable. This explains, in part, the difficulty of forging a strategic consensus regarding security and defence.

Some participants viewed the previous decade critically, arguing that it was a ‘low and dishonest decade’. They felt that many lessons had not been learnt, citing the lack of strategy which seemed to them to characterise the intervention in Libya. For the past ten years the US and some European allies have been fighting unpopular wars. In Afghanistan, it was highlighted that international efforts could not achieve long-lasting results, largely because the international community is dealing with an ‘unreformable political leader in an unreformable country’. This led to a critical discussion of the future of liberal internationalism and especially its liberal interventionist dimension. One key point raised was that the last decade showed that irrespective of a coalition’s power, there are limits to how much change can be achieved via intervention, especially when lacking a clear strategy and defined endgame.

After 1992, there was greater shift to a unipolar world, in which the United States could, seemingly, do anything it wanted - invading Iraq being cited as the ultimate example. Recent developments have brought transformation in the international system. The US remains the most powerful actor in the system, yet the position of China and Russia is changing. The ‘war on terror’ continues, even if it has been downgraded and re-framed as a strategic challenge. While the geopolitics of the war on terror still determine much of the agenda of the international community, with significant attention on Iran as a source of sponsorship for extremist groups and regional instability.

Moreover, the previous two decades were ones of economic prosperity, in which Europe did well economically. Today the Eurozone crisis illustrates that Europe is entering a difficult era, with considerable scepticism for the future of globalization as seen in the uncertain course of the Doha rounds.
One participant suggested that the world as seen by senior French academic Dominique Moïsi, which divides the world into three sets of nations - nations of appetite (set to surpass the West), nations of resentment (seeking revenge for perceived humiliation) and the developed (more status quo-orientated nations) – seems increasingly to reflect realities. Building on this, the speaker added with scepticism that the Arab Spring will be followed by another series of revolutions within the next 20 years, not necessarily in the same direction. Overall, the absence of US flags during the Arab Spring seemed to exemplify a broader declining trust in American leadership.

Another different vision was put forward that Europe is witnessing an economically-driven transition to global multipolarity. The presentation went on to assess the European strategic environment and implications for European and British strategy. In sum, the proposed model suggests that, due to globalization and the spread of technology, certain economies will grow faster than the leading ones that devote considerable energy to innovation. This in turn shifts the balance of power - a trend which generates security dilemmas and major power security competition. The probability for conflict thereby also increases.

**The European Strategic Environment and its Significance**

It was argued that in the future Western Europe will remain a zone of peace. There was also a general recognition that the US is not likely to withdraw completely from Europe in the near future. However, the US is expected to scale down its physical presence, and focus on particular missions or interventions, on a case-by-case basis (as in Libya). This was considered to be a crucial change, in the sense that in the past century the US was regarded as the cornerstone of European security and defence. In other words, in a post-American world Europe may be increasingly called on to provide security and defence on its own continent and in its neighbourhood.

The re-emergence of Russia as a powerful actor in European politics was also pointed out. Geo-economics (e.g. pipeline politics) and geo-politics (e.g. the Russian-Georgian War) were considered to be key determinants that need to be addressed on a collective basis. Apart from Russia’s resurgence, the emergence of other regional and global centres of power also means that the future will be characterised by considerable competition and balancing. In this new strategic environment, uncertainty will fuel insecurity which may push an increasing number of countries to pursue nuclear weapons and capabilities for deterrence and coercion. Additionally, due to technological
advances, the protection of sea lanes of communication and critical supply chains is becoming a significant priority. In this broader picture of unpredictability and uncertainty, one discussant stressed the higher risk of military crises, some of which could have the potential to embroil European powers. In this context, it was argued that the UK needs to steer away from ‘liberal interventionism’ or David Cameron’s ‘muscular liberalism’ to the extent that it undermines the country’s strategic position. It was put forward that the UK no longer has the capacity to engage on numerous fronts, and should resist involvement in situations which require a commitment of troops and resources for unspecified durations.

This delineation of an increasingly post-American and uncertain European strategic environment led many participants to stress that there is a need for Europeans to assume greater responsibility. The need for greater cooperation among EU partners, in particular the most militarily powerful EU states was a recurrent theme. With respect to the UK, one participant suggested the vital nature of balanced deterrent forces, to return to offshore balancing with strategic capabilities in sea, air and cyberspace but also the substitution of the Trident with ICBMs to ensure a secure second strike deterrent.

**Power, Change and Interventions in the 21st Century**

Given the considerable discussion and debate over forms of soft power, and particularly the EU’s ability to exercise them effectively, one participant questioned whether Europe could guarantee its security through investments in soft power. It was argued that other institutions have limited power to act on their own and therefore cannot always be considered a dependable partner for cooperation. If that is the case, it was argued that it is vital for Europe to rediscover a strategic culture which could lead to the development of hard power capabilities that can solidly advance European security.

One discussant further enquired whether with the growing economic and military power of the Asian states came an increasing realization that there are costs to share; whether these countries will emerge as responsible stakeholders in the international system, and whether there are ways for Europe to ensure this. It was argued that the world’s most powerful state(s) appear to be stepping back to allow rising powers to share the load of running the international system. However, the differences with China were also underlined; China appears as a modern or even, for some, pre-modern power in a world which the Europeans see as post-modern. Due to such different perspectives, it was argued that dealing with China will be a great challenge.
(one discussant, in a subsequent session explained that this is precisely the reason why a greater effort needs to be devoted to understanding China). More generally, it was agreed that more research was needed on China's ever increasing need for resources and its policy consequences as well as its demographic trends and growing internal demand.

Another participant delved deeper into the question of military intervention, to explain that though all interventions come at a cost, some are necessary as the cost of non-intervention can be even greater, the Balkans were cited as a case in point. The Balkan intervention, with all its imperfections, was seen to have fared much better than Iraq and Afghanistan; the cost of not intervening would have been immediately and directly felt in Europe. It was therefore argued that the counter-insurgency in Afghanistan had been mismanaged, with a lack of articulate narratives, clear endgames or comprehensive exit strategies. However, a counter argument was that the post-intervention situation in the Balkans is far from perfect given the continued instability in the region.

In the field of security and defence, the speed of change seems even faster than at any other time. The limits of deterrence are becoming increasingly apparent. Deterrence appears to be less effective against key risks, including terrorism and the protection of lines of communications. The rapid change and rising complexity of the threats at hand imply that, today, it is even more expensive to defend ourselves than in the past. It reportedly cost Al Qaeda a million dollars to attack the West and it has been costing the West a million dollars per hour to defend itself post-9/11. In other words, the diffusion of power towards non-state actors with malevolent intentions, demands that states commit disproportionally high resources to defend against these groups.

**The Absence of Strategy**

The participants unanimously agreed that Europeans and their allies do not do strategy very well; often disregarding Clausewitz's heeding to avoid becoming war's servant. On the question of how to foster a strategic culture to ensure that Europeans pay adequate and balanced attention to those forms of power that can guarantee their security, some participants expressed the belief that external pressures, namely the international system itself, will serve this purpose. It was suggested that domestic politics will be a crucial factor influencing the international system. There was recognition that it is difficult to say with certainty if economic integration and globalisation will lead
to social frictions, tensions and domestic instability which could increase the probability of conflict. It was argued that if economic integration is managed strategically and effectively, this could have a stabilizing effect on the international system, contributing to the prevention of conflicts and clashes.

Apart from economic integration and globalization, Europeans have to manage their relationship with Russia more strategically. Some discussants stressed that it is crucial to see Russia as it is - no longer a global power (perhaps even with no such aspiration) but a European power with considerable regional interests, a major energy power and, in many ways, still an awkward partner. Nonetheless, in spite of the recognition that Russia is now clearly European, it was emphasized that Russia will not become part of the key European security structures. In recognition of this reality, it was stressed that Europe needs to be strategic in its relationship with Russia. It needs to stabilize this relationship, set it on a solid basis of cooperation, and tie it to the NATO-led security system and vision.

This was followed by an evaluation of the Euro-Atlantic strategic establishments, with a view to examine whether they are contributing to this lack of strategy. In this discussion, many participants asserted that the problem lies more with the divergence among the perceived interests of the partners. One discussant stressed that when it comes to Grand Strategy NATO is doing quite well, rapidly adapting to the new security environment and embracing early on the key concept of risk management. Where NATO is less impressive is when it goes to war, as it fails to set clear aims, and enters situations and interventions without having previously conducted a thorough analysis of desired outcomes and the means of achieving them. This was epitomized by the fact that NATO appeared to have no thorough strategy in Afghanistan until 2007. Today, once again it seems that NATO is navigating uncharted waters, in the sense that it has not yet developed a specific strategy in Libya. What it has is a rather vague set of objectives, coupled with extensive uncertainty regarding how it can actually achieve them.

One participant noted that when it comes to military interventions, Europeans tend to do the right thing for the wrong reason. From a strategic point of view, adding soldiers and resources along the way during an operation is wrong. However, it was stressed that one had to recognise that political will continues to add constraints on policy, making it difficult to put forward all the costs and implications frankly and transparently on the table for a public audience. Discussing openly all the parameters, in today’s world, might undermine effectiveness, leading to lesser commitment and action.
Two more general points were that: i) there is a strategic gap above the operational commanders, (those who have been through operation experience, and those who have not); and ii) the increasingly apparent lack of appetite among policy-makers and strategists to work in large groups, which is partly due to a recognition that large groups tend to find very little common ground.

**After Afghanistan**

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the debates of when and how to intervene became more complex, and have been ever more present. The ‘new’ antiterrorism strategy of the White House - i.e. a) taking surgical action against specific groups to decapitate their leadership, b) denying them safe heavens and c) avoiding costly interventions - was discussed, with several participants pointing out that such a strategy had been articulated before. One participant argued that, after Afghanistan, the question of intervention will be more difficult for the US and Europe, identifying three reasons why this will be the case:

- First, American and key European allies are exhausted;
- Second, they have lost credibility across much of the Muslim world;
- and third, rising powers will be reluctant to allow interventions in their spheres of influence and interest, thereby denying access to UN Security Council resolutions (Syria was mentioned in this context).

In terms of narratives, the ‘If we do not go to Afghanistan, Afghanistan will come to us’ concept never really convinced the public, and is even less likely to do so in the future. In the past, one discussant explained, interventions were largely seen as necessary, effective, with some 80% of NATO’s energy and thought going into interventions. Interventions, then, were also more welcome: ‘NATO was good for Bosnia and Bosnia good for NATO’. In the past, the main obstacle was NATO’s own hesitation. Now the question is more complex, and external actors have considerable influence on the Alliance’s decisions.

Moreover, it was mentioned that in the past, US and Europe had abundant forces, citing the example of the conflict management effort in Kosovo. The Comprehensive Approach seemed to be working. In general, NATO did not co-decide strategy with other institutions, but once it initiated an effort, other
key institutions including the EU, the Organization for Security and Co-Operation Europe (OSCE), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank would then come with the funds for reconstruction and development, reform programmes, expert advice and guidance, and their diplomats and officials to ensure long-lasting solutions.

**Euro-Atlantic Rationales for Interventionism**

Building on earlier points, one participant identified three sets of questions that needed to be addressed prior to deciding on an intervention.

1. Is the local population united against a dictator? Is the political system and infrastructure of the country in question capable of supporting a change of government after the end of the intervention? Which actors are likely to take over after the intervention?

2. Is there an easier, albeit more effective, option than intervention? Are there more low-cost, less demanding solutions possibly involving the smart and responsible use of advanced (military) technology (for example drone/UAV strategic strikes?)

3. Are interventions inevitable because of public opinion, or do the US and its European allies intervene because of a powerful sense of responsibility?

Europe has to increase its strategic approach to interventions, recognising that the US is increasing ambivalent and even reluctant to intervene militarily. In this sense, the fact that only three European countries, namely France, the UK and Italy, were seriously engaged in Libya is worrying; especially if one realises that the US still provides the key capabilities for the operation. Arguably, it would be inadvisable to commit land forces abroad again, especially in a fight against an amorphous enemy (e.g. terror). The preferred approach could be on strategic and decisive strikes, possibly with the help of technology, and a more strategic use of elite Special Forces.

The intervention strategy advanced by the US effectively suggests staying safe in a fortress and hitting from a distance or in other terms ‘leading from behind’. But while this American strategy may be good for the US, it may be less so for Europe, insofar as it may signify that the US has relaxed its commitment to European security through substantial military presence in Europe, and as several European countries may find an approaching relying heavily on targeting killings, the use of drone attacks and Special Forces in
contradiction with overall security strategies based on the rule of law and post-conflict reconstruction.

The discussion then focused on the issue of deepening EU defence policy and capabilities. Debate was generated after one participant argued that the importance of the recent Franco-British alliance is overestimated, suggesting it may even be doing more harm than good in the sense that it inhibits other EU member States from closer defence cooperation while undermining parallel international institutions and the CSDP. It is increasingly difficult to find common ground in European foreign policies – as unfortunately epitomized by disagreement among the most important EU players (a telling example being Germany’s stance with respect to Libya). However, the discussant also expressed the view that integration is the only road ahead, and ‘Europe will walk it’ – adding that the key to integration will be the ‘bonding’ process of combating a series of crises together.

One response to these thoughts was that the key to a robust EU security and defence policy lay with ever-broadening ‘cycles of multilateralisation’. According to this approach, an intra-EU bilateral cooperation, such as the Franco-British agreement, could be a welcome first step, not an end in itself. The Franco-British partnership is a natural one, facilitated by the cooperation of the two countries during the Balkan wars, the St Malo initiative, and more recently the full reintegration of France in NATO. The interests of the two countries are tied in such a way that an attack on the strategic interests of one, will affect the other. The UK and France continue to see themselves as carrying great hard-power strategic weight and currency, but once a successful deepening has taken place in the relationship, the circle can open out to others. If other member states are ready to join in at a strategic level, UK and France will be open for discussion. However, while the EU cannot work for long via directoires, it also has to address the issue of reaching too low a denominator when in full session. Following any decision to broaden cooperation and other militarily capable member-states join, gradually broadening the circle – then deepening, and hence integration is even more necessary for continued effectiveness. Another participant said in this context that the concept of multi-bilateral cooperation was possible for a period of time in NATO, but with respect to the EU, the question remains whether the UK and France are ready and willing to provide the adequate leadership to foster more intra-EU cooperation, and hence avoid risking the alienation of others.
Knowledge & Strategy: Clausewitz and Sun Tzu in Perspective

Another discussant underlined the importance for the West to spend more time seeking to understand the emerging powers, and China in particular. In the process, it would be even more constructive if the West took time to see itself in a detached way, and study its own behaviour and actions. Whereas the Chinese have spent considerable time studying Western strategists, the West has not devoted an equal effort to understand Eastern strategists such as Sun Tzu. The ‘East’ arguably approaches war through a more holistic sense, taking simultaneously a more Darwinian view of power and a more Hegelian understanding of war – as being fought in and among societies. This is evident in the writings of Sun Tzu, for whom everything is political with society being the key focal point. Although in the West, there is a clear distinction between man and nature; in the East, man and nature are seen as one. Along these lines, the West tries to control nature, whereas in the East, living in harmony with the environment is essential. In a similar way, the West seeks to manage the time of an intervention, the exact commencement of hostilities, pursuing a swift and decisive success. In the East, strategy involves defeating the enemy without ever fighting; it involves attacking the alliances and the enemy’s strategy, aiming to overthrow the other state while avoiding protracted wars (this thinking could also apply to long-term economic and cyber war strategies).

Examples such as Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan were given as indicative of the unintended consequences of the short-termism that pervades Western strategy. With respect to knowledge, in the East there is recognition that to know the enemy, you have to know yourself. Citing the example of Libya, the discussant explained that the West has a dual problem. On the one hand, it does not spend enough time in analysing and studying its opponent – as, for example, Libya’s political and tribal map and its relationship to Gaddafi. On the other hand, the West also has a huge problem of knowing itself, often telling itself only what it wants to hear – for instance, that it does not practice deception, that it fights surgical, humane wars with the minimization of civilian casualties at the heart of its strategy.

In response to this presentation, one discussant agreed that when it comes to the crucial question of knowledge, the evidence is troubling. As evidence, the discussant noted that the operation in Libya took place without a thorough analysis and with several misperceptions. These included the assumption that Libya was a continuation of the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia (while in contrast it had considerable elements of an ethnic/tribal war), that Qaddafi was the expression of a small corrupt elite (as opposed to a large tribe and
social group) and that a swift decapitation of that elite was possible which would allow for a swift transition. However, another participant felt compelled to challenge the idea that we are ‘Over-Easternizing’ the enemy, suggesting instead that we tend if anything to ‘Over-Westernize’ the enemy, arguing that there is a risk, through this process, of weakening the identity of the West and the values it has been standing for and promoting over the past decades. While making every effort to understand the enemy, one should not have to relinquish key values.

The West will have to live in a 21st century world, with the ‘cracks and wounds’ of this new world having been caused largely by the West’s own actions of the past decades. The current US administration has arguably spent too much time attempting to reverse the previous rhetoric; now a change in strategy is needed to meet this narrative-shift. For this to materialize, a better understanding and mastering of ‘smart power’ is imperative. There was optimism among the discussants that the financial crisis will push in that direction. Adaptability and resilience may not produce a grand strategy, but may produce a competent one

Understanding Liberal Interventionism from an EU and NATO Angle

The EU has adopted a more hybrid approach and a more modest role, that of supporting other organizations trying to manage conflicts (though it has had some conflict management success, as in Georgia). At a time of declining capabilities there is a de facto need for greater solidarity. Today, only a quarter of EU partners participate in Libya, with the UK and France alone supplying over 50% of the capabilities. In a way, one participant noted, there were many unfounded hopes in the Lisbon Treaty, including the EU equivalent of article five, which is an unreliable one. The same participant predicted that in the foreseeable future, the pattern will remain roughly the same: the US will ask Europeans to take on their responsibilities and sort out their backyard and the Europeans will only agree if backed by the US. However, it is important to note that the conflict management effort in Libya was a European (Franco-British) initiative.

With respect to NATO, it was mentioned that it was sometimes called in well after the intervention was underway, with Afghanistan being a striking example (also in Libya). Moreover, it was emphasized that there is considerable inconsistency in the West’s narrative which causes fluctuations in its support. In other words, the West fails to ‘sell’ its case effectively to its
people – an example being Afghanistan. The rhetoric has ranged from the idea that ‘if we do not go to Afghanistan, Afghanistan will come to us’, - in other words that it is a vital national security issue - to a series of other aims relating to democratization, human and especially women’s rights, and other important, - albeit different than initially championed - concerns. Also, some participants reflected critically on the situation in Afghanistan, noting that though much has been achieved, it is highly uncertain how much of this change is permanent and will ensue post-withdrawal.

A New, Complicated Global Setting and its Implications

One participant noted that instead of institutions and member-states working in sequence, Europe has to work in parallel. Crucially, Europe should avoid entering asymmetric warfare, where different mentalities and ideas clash: namely, between an enemy that is ready to kill and be killed and one that is hesitant and afraid of the costs of fighting. If it is to be the case that the US cannot rely on the Europeans, and that Europeans will not be able to rely on the Americans, at least in the European neighbourhood, the question then becomes one of how to operationalize EU-NATO relations, in which context the US relationship is crucial.

In this discussion the concept of the ‘enemy being yourself’ was revisited, with the conclusion that though fair, the concept applies to East and West alike. Indeed, America’s ‘Western’ ethos has been put in question on several foreign policy issues, and as a result of the support the US had given to some people and their regimes. On the other hand, ‘Eastern’ China is more militarily capable of addressing issues not only at its borders, but also beyond that. In the last three years China has been particularly assertive and aggressive in its region, thereby generating considerable concern. However one discussant added that though worries are understandable they should not be overplayed as the Chinese are very cautious in their calculations, carefully weighing the possible consequences of their actions. Managing the relationship with China responsibly and effectively, as well as concluding as optimally as possible the ongoing interventions will be crucial with respect to whether, in ten years’ time, Europe will be lamenting once again a decade where millions have been spent, lives have been lost, and actions are regretted.

The Death of Bin Laden and the future of Terrorism

It was widely accepted that the death of Osama Bin Laden is a crucial milestone. While making the world a safer place, it will also mark the
fragmentation of the terrorist threat away from Al Qaeda as the main terrorist threat. Moreover, as it coincided with the Arab Spring, some participants argued that it might be that in the future the Arab Spring will be seen as epitomising Al Qaeda’s failure.

One discussant explained that while it may still be unclear whether Bin Laden was linked to any (recent) plots, his death, together with the death of other key Al Qaeda leaders, is a crucial achievement in Western foreign policy objectives. However, there are today several groups whose echoes are heard throughout the world. For instance, Anwar al-Awlaki has emerged as a key figure, his power has increased - not the least because of his knowledge of the US and Europe from the inside.

Overall it was remarked that there is a constant thread of political violence and terrorism. After Bin Laden’s death, this threat has only diversified. But, following Bin Laden’s death, the US is likely to pull out of Afghanistan more swiftly. The current intervention in Libya is also an important threat with respect to terrorism. One participant warned that if not strategically managed, a post-intervention Libya could become, like Bosnia, a terrorist training centre, once again at the very borders of Europe. In this context, it was noted that a tight-borders approach to terrorism is not easy in Europe, because of the free movement policy.

One participant underlined that being a terrorist leader seems to be becoming a very dangerous occupation, quoting General David Petraeus’ recent report that states that 240 terrorist leaders have been killed over a 90-day period. Terrorists are increasingly aware, that the West is able to track them, hunt them down and kill them and their associates irrespective of where they hide. The eradication of a 500-strong Al Qaeda group in Waziristan was also underlined as a key development.

Airports were cited as providing a particular problem with terrorists trying to attack regardless of the numerous restrictions. When it comes to terrorism, a participant noted, one cannot take anything for granted, referring to the risk of a CBRN attack to explain that it should not be assumed that terrorists will not undertake such a strike just because they have not done so yet. Adding urgency to the point, the same discussant reiterated the ‘Hawkin’s factor’: that the greatest threat will come from a biotechnological genius in some obscure lab in the Middle East. With respect to cyber-terrorism, some participants disagreed with the view that until we have human casualties from cyber-terrorism we should treat it as ‘a dog that does not bark’. They argued that preventing human casualties, protecting critical infrastructure as well as
sensitive economic, military and other types of vital information are not things which a responsible state can afford to ignore. Another participant underlined the difficulty of determining the source of any cyber-attack.

**Counter-Terrorism & Ethics: How Far Can We Go?**

One speaker was sceptical about the question of ethics in the current Western anti-terrorism tactics. This revolved around the question of the targeted killing of terrorists. It was noted that the drone-strike killings and the killing from distance doctrine in general raised important questions with respect to ethics. This impersonal delivery of justice in the form of so-called surgical strikes from UAVs flying at 60,000 feet arguably requires thorough evaluation, and so does the choice of targets. For example known terrorists might be able to leave London, only to be targeted with a surgical strike when he lands in Waziristan; a problematic picture from an ethical perspective.

As a contribution to this debate one participant invoked the decision of the Israeli Supreme Court, which ruled that extra-judicial killings can only be justified on the basis of preventing an imminent threat of great magnitude (adding that with respect to the terrorist threat there is considerable difficulty in measuring accurately). Counterterrorism strategies hence involve decisions on important moral issues, which in turn are dependent on threat assessments and relevant judgements, with one discussant adding that the US and its allies would be better off recognizing this before 9/11.

These views instigated a discussion which extended beyond ethics, with some participants keen to stress the practical realities. For instance, UAV strikes have been successful in weakening Al Qaeda’s leadership and has served as a deterrent in itself. Moreover, the legal frameworks and values of the US, and Europe vary significantly. Some things unthinkable in Europe are possible in the US, while some other, unthinkable in both the US and Europe are possible in the terrorist’s base country or elsewhere. Some of these points led a participant to observe that Europe is protected by a set of laws and values, which means that certain practices would not be approved in the EU (e.g. US interrogation techniques). Another discussant referred to the Storm Shadow strikes in Libya, pointing out that they do not differ much from drone attacks. Similarly, in 2008, there were reports of British tomahawk strikes to kill Bin Laden in Afghanistan. In view of these examples, one participant stressed the importance of the deficiency of international law in this field.
EU Defence under Austerity: How, When and Among Whom can Cooperation Work

The fourth and final session of the Workshop began with recognition that resource pressures on Europe are immense. The US is now supplying 75% of NATO’s resources, both because it has to finance the missions it is leading, but also due to a decline of European contributions. Nonetheless, it was also stressed that the American budget, albeit huge, is to an extent inflated, as 60% of the sum in fact covers the wages and pensions of personnel and Veterans. In recognition of the changing economic reality, the UK is moving away from high troop levels, shifting its focus to the development and acquisition of more ‘modern’ capabilities, best-fitted to address the ‘new challenges’. In light of this, the Franco-British defence treaties should be seen as a very sensible step. Given that the UK and France are the only member states with nuclear deterrent capabilities, aircraft carriers and a global expedition capacity, the bilateral agreement was widely regarded as a reasonable starting point for what should become a wave of intensified defence cooperation across the Union.

It was noted that European countries will be called to conduct their strategic thinking under austerity for a long period of time and that it should not be treated as a short term process. To date, military strategizing under conditions of austerity has meant pursuing more limited ends for many member states who must agree to do less and lower their ambitions. This will naturally lead to a Europe of more limited means. Overall, the record shows that in Europe there are an increasing number of capability gaps though no agreement of how to fill them. Cooperation, pooling and sharing strategic resources, drawing forces together seems as an ever-compelling logic. In theory, countries engaging in this will gain in efficiency, resources and capabilities. But even if all these gains are realised, this comes at a high cost; mainly in terms of political autonomy. Therefore, participants highlighted the fact that there’s a partial trade-off between political autonomy and intensified cooperation that must be recognised.

Building on these points, one participant stressed that there is a clear risk of Europeans lowering their aims and commitment, cooperating little, and in the end falling far short of common ambitions for global security. Four main points were raised:

1. There is no money;

2. Given the tough fiscal situation, reallocation of existing resources is imperative;
3. Through cooperation there is substantial room for savings;

4. The vast majority of pooling and sharing efforts have so far failed or have been expensive.

Nonetheless, there is now greater evidence of what works and what fails – a compass which can help Europe to be more efficient and effective in its new cooperation efforts.

Five preconditions were also established for more effective pooling and sharing.

1. Pooling and sharing works best between countries with similar strategic cultures. Therefore, the Franco-British agreement is likely to work better than the Franco-German brigade because the two countries share a similar expeditionary vision, global outlook and ambitions.

2. Cooperation with partners that are trusted politically is crucial to avoid the fears of abandonment and entrapment. Again, the existence of a common strategic culture would be helpful. It is to an extent an issue of joint identity which gives an increased sense of solidarity and partners feel more secure with respect to the credibility of the pact – e.g. Swedes have a Nordic as well as European identity.

3. Losses in the sphere of national defence economics have to be suffered equally. There are already tensions in the Franco-British partnership stemming from uncertainty regarding the losses UK defence industries are facing through this multi-level defence integration.

4. It is important that the sharing of resources between two partners takes place for the same reason. Common ground can be found in the less popular areas including common education and training, as well as sharing of immobile resources including the closing down of military bases.

5. Finally, low levels of corruption tend to facilitate pooling and sharing. This relates to the fact that people have to trust that the managers of this project will not mismanage funds.

Overall there was a lucid recognition that a ‘share it or lose it moment’ may be a driver for deeper EU defence integration in the immediate future. As a recipe for success, some participants added that the integration of ‘front-line’ resources has proved a more precarious field in which to find agreement.
Involving defence companies in the drafting of the agreement might help address some of this precariousness. Where the UK has been involved so far, multilateral patterns of cooperation tend to prove ineffective or inefficient, though pooling non-deployable capabilities has gone better. It was noted that if the planning is wrong, countries may end up paying more through a cooperative approach. The very idea of saving money through cooperation is based on the principle of addressing challenges cooperatively. If there is absence of trust in the new structure, countries may end up paying twice for the resources, out of a perceived need to maintain independent capabilities apart of those shared.

One discussant commented that saving is not necessarily a good concept as any resources saved will not be re-invested strategically in defence; instead, they are likely to be redirected to different sectors. The key to efficiency in the sphere of defence is a multi-level political cooperation and integration. This would pave the way for pragmatic and effective defence integration and cooperation.

**The Approach: Bottom-Up?**

This process can only start from the bottom. But NATO and, during the past decade, EU integration and cooperation in security and defence have shown the limits of effective cooperation and integration. Nonetheless, some participants underlined that there remains room for net gains too, citing the example of supersonic air force capabilities of the Czechs and Slovaks. Operating strictly on their individual capabilities they would probably have to accept to lose the capability of commanding supersonic air force capabilities altogether. Hence, there are instances were cuts in the defence spending may be key to maintaining capabilities. Adverse economic conditions transform governments into more pragmatic actors, ready to pool and share at greater levels. Some participants added that pooling and sharing is already becoming like world peace - everybody likes it, approves of it and aspires to achieve it but actually going about it proves a major challenge. The key question is how to make the most of this enthusiasm, and ensure the maximization of returns. Cooperating with the US is complex, not least because of several restrictions the US imposes. Nonetheless, the US is now thinking of opening itself up to the European space. Yet European relations and interaction with the US will remain a key question, and the stress and strain caused from the withdrawal from Afghanistan will not be small. This possible relaxation or cooling of the transatlantic defence cooperation could be a catalyst, in the sense of leading to bold decisions for further integration.
Whether this will be possible given the highly euro-sceptic climate remains to be seen.

Building on this picture, one participant observed that the only thing that really drives capabilities is ambition and aspiration. In Europe, the issue remained that there is no common identity. Hence, when the 27 are asked about their ambitions, there are 27 responses, and it is difficult to make common policy on that basis. The concept of regional islands of collaboration was recurrent in the discussion, often accompanied by examples as the cooperation of peripheral EU member states for strategic airlift capabilities. Nonetheless, some participants were sceptical with respect to how much effective pooling and sharing is possible and/or desirable within the Union, adding that effective sharing is much more likely to occur between particular EU countries and countries outside Europe such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, who share trust, similar visions and similar strategic cultures and perceptions of threat.

Other crucial observations included that if cooperation comes at the expense of jobs and industries, this may lead to public dissatisfaction and an alienation of the EU public. Moreover, it was emphasized that politicians have been tiring publics, and dividing the EU community with a series of optional operations, even wars of choice, when most people are anxious about many other things, with only 3% of people worried about defence. This percentage, of course, reflects the absence of a clear existential threat. After all, another participant noted, the decline in the defence budgets of European countries did not begin with the financial crisis, but rather with a decline in the belief of the usefulness of defence spending - which in times of peace and prosperity is seen as unnecessary and backwards. Another speaker pointed to changing international dynamics, noting that there’s sometimes the assumption that the future will not affect today, that these changes will be temporary and pass, return to what was before, explaining that there is a degree of hubris in such an assessment. In conclusion, the discussant noted that the potential, if not forthcoming, of the re-emergence of a real, albeit invisible threat, would help foster an effective and more constructive approach towards the development of capabilities. Closing on a critical note, one participant said that perhaps the paradigm for the first few decades of the 21st century might be that there will be no paradigm.
Conclusions

The fifth workshop of the European Security and Defence Forum evaluated the experience of the past decade in order to identify lessons learned or not. The discussants - policy-makers, security and defence officials, advisors and leading researchers critically evaluated past practices with respect to: responses to changes in the global balance of power, military interventions, counter-terrorism strategies and approaches to strategy under austerity. In sum, there was considerable agreement that we are entering a period of great uncertainty as far as the emerging international system and its stability are concerned. Greater preparedness for a tougher security environment is vital given this mounting ambiguity. Integration and interdependence need to be strategically pursued with potential outcomes evaluated and weighted beforehand. Knowledge will be power in this new phase. Europe, the US and likeminded countries need to work closer together and take robust, strategic steps towards further defence integration. This will help them retain a leading position in the new international context and the ability to advance stability and safeguard their interests.

The profound lack of strategy that characterised the interventions of the 2000s remains. Strategies for intervention must entail a more comprehensive assessment of the desired outcomes post-intervention. Counterterrorism strategies seem to be moving in circles. Nonetheless, the participants agreed that strategic use of technology for effective elimination of threats without casualties or protracted commitment of forces is a strategy in the right direction. It needs however to be expanded and capitalized upon, further developing and improving the capabilities at hand. The good news is that this is possible with a re-direction of funds, especially as far as the EU is concerned. The bad news is that Europe needs to secure the political will for this, and in this economic environment, funds for defence are not often forthcoming. On a final note, the workshop examined when, and among whom, deepening in the defence sphere can occur successfully. The prerequisites include converging strategic cultures of the actors in question, which may then be fostered among greater groups after the core is consolidated.