The Northern EU

National Views on the Emerging Security Dimension

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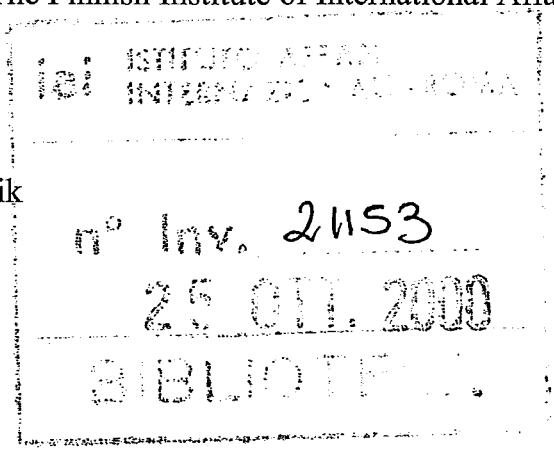

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Contents

Abbreviations

AC	Arctic Council
AFNORTH	Allied Forces Northwest Europe
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
B – 7	Baltic Sea Islands
BALTBAT	Joint Baltic peacekeeping battalion, head quarter: Latvia (created in 1994 by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania)
BALTDEFCOL	Joint Baltic defence college (based in Estonia)
BALTNET	Baltic Joint air surveillance network
BALTRON	Baltic Joint naval squadron
BALTSEA	Baltic security assistance forum (launched in April 1997)
BEAC	Barents Euro-Arctic Council
BNFL	British Nuclear Fuels Ltd.
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CBSS	Council of Baltic Sea States
CEE	Central and Eastern European
CEEC	Central and Eastern European Countries
CENTRASBAT	Joint peacekeeping battalion to be created by Kazakhstan, Kyrghyzstan and Uzbekistan (following the BALTBAT example)
CESDP	Common Euroepan Security and Defence Policy
CFE	Conventional Forces in Europe, Combined Forces, Europe
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force

CSBM	Confidence & Security Building Measures
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
EACP	Euro Atlantic Council for Partnership
EC	European Community
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
ECU	European Currency Unit
EEA	European Economic Area
EEC	European Economic Community
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EMU	European Monetary Union
EPC	European Political Co-operation
ESDI	European Security and Defence Identity
ETA	Basc Country and Freedom
EU	European Union
EUCARIS	European Car and Driving licence information system (set up in March 1999)
FRAP	Patriotic and Antifascist Revolutionary Front
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HELCOM	Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission
ICE	Italian Foreign Ministry
IFOR	Implementation Force - Operation Joint Endeavour in Bosnia and Herzegovina
IGC	Intergovernmental Conference
ISTAT	Italian Institute of Statistics
JPC	Joint Planning Committee
MEP	Member of the European Parliament

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSA	Nuclear Safety Account
NSR	Northern Sea Route
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PCA	Partnership and Co-operation Agreement
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PHARE	Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring the Economy
PSOE	Spanish Socialist Party
SEK	Swedish Krona
SFOR	Stabilisation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Talks/Treaty
TACIS	Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States
TEPSA	Trans European Policy Studies Association
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
WEU	Western European Union
WPO	Warsaw Pact Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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(Ashgate, Aldershot 1998); *Participation and influence: Finland, Sweden and the post-Amsterdam development of the CFSP* (Occasional Paper 11, WEU Institute for Security Studies, Paris, January 2000), and, together with Gunilla Herolf and Rutger Lindahl, *Non-alignment and European Security Policy: ambiguity at work.* Programme on the Northern Dimension of the CFSP, Finnish Institute of International Affairs and Institut für Europäische Politik, Helsinki 2000.

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Introduction: The Northern Dimension as a challenging task

Wolfgang Wessels

When launched in 1997 by the Finnish prime minister[1], the subject of the "Northern Dimension" was new, irritating and challenging. It was not an aspect belonging to the conventional items on the political and academic agenda of the European Union (EU), even though the northern flank was quite high on the agenda of NATO. Novelty, however, is sometimes needed to adapt to changing constellations. Thus the term Northern Dimension might contribute to the dynamic evolution of the necessary debate on the international role of the EU.[2] As with the dramatic changes after the end of the bipolar world – the fall of the Berlin Wall in the centre of Europe – Europeans had to reconsider their identity in the European and the international system.[3] The provisions of both the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties documented the conviction of its member states that – without breaking with the past – the EU should shoulder more responsibilities and develop active strategies. The wars in the former Yugoslavia underlined the need to evolve out of a mere observer role. The Helsinki decision of the European Council in 1999 on pursuing a common defence policy also signalled that the propensity for a more active role is part of a longer term trend.

The initiative for the Northern Dimension should be seen as a means to add to a broader view of foreign policy. It draws attention to a region which was outside the area of common concern for most member states.[4] Other neighbourhood regions – such as the Middle East, Central and Eastern Europe – were ranked much higher on the common list of shared EU challenges

than the North. The long debate on European identity in the international system[5] did not include the problems raised in that region in a satisfying way. Global links to other regional groupings like ASEAN and the Mercosur were placed higher on the EU's foreign policy agenda than these new borders of the EU. Somehow it was, for many observers and politicians, like an area forgotten or at least low on the agenda of threat perception. The benign neglect was due to geographical distance, the lack of historical memories and – perhaps most important – to apparently crisis-free evolutions. Without media attention foreign policy preferences are difficult to amend or even bring up.

Irritating ambiguities

Though many analysts would agree that the area was neglected, the irritations were considerable at first. Many actors and observers were afraid that the term "Northern Dimension" would lead to a cleavage between different geopolitical priorities within the Union, thus creating barriers within the EU and leading to an unproductive confrontation between northern, southern and eastern orientations. The risk of subregionalisation seemed to threaten a basic ingredient of any "common" policy: that of solidarity among all members of the Union and that of a common identity in dealings with neighbours. Regionally delimited views of the Union could lead to a fragmentation reducing the unity of the EU in its international performance. The basic principle of consistency[6] seemed at stake: less in legal and institutional terms but more in the political perceptions of the geographical dimension.

Beyond the instinctive reaction, quite a few observers doubted the utility and the wisdom of such a concept. For many the term was already strange: "dimension" could mean different

things, ranging from hard security to environmental and local co-operation.

The geographical borders of the Northern Dimension were quite often unclear. It was asked whether the Northern Dimension concerns 'only' the Baltic states with the bordering regions of Russia, or also Iceland and the Arctic Circle. Furthermore the 'real' objectives appeared hidden: was it just a Finnish initiative proposed mainly in view of this country's own geographical interest or the starting point for the policy of a larger group of northern countries?

The means and strategies to be employed were also open to debate. As in other areas the EU also has several offers and sanctions for dealing with other countries, though the mixture of these instruments always needs new approaches; their effectiveness is in many cases doubtful. Thus the initiative runs into a typical discourse on the EU's role and way of working: How do the desired priorities for "low politics" initiatives via the European Community's programmes relate to vaguely formulated "high politics" goals of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)?[7] Worried commentators claim the EU was implicitly pushed to take up responsibility which it was unwilling and unable to shoulder. The EU as a key action was apparently asked to contribute to solving some – so far rather distant – problems; critics were afraid that a new regional responsibility without clear objectives and an adequate set of instruments would add to the "capability-expectation gap" that the haunted Union was blamed for throughout the nineties.[8] Others perceived the initiative as just a synonym for a useful policy vis-à-vis Russia: in that case, they argued, the EU needs a comprehensive policy not only directed towards one region of that important actor in Europe and world politics but towards several geographical and sectoral areas of common concern and interest. The Northern Dimension would then have to be integrated into a "common EU strategy" towards Russia in an even more comprehensive way.

Challenges

The Finnish initiative excluded traditional security but it was useful in initiating a debate to put the North of the EU 'on the map'. The challenge is, however, more than that of just adding a new area to an already long list of potential problem regions around the Union. As in every other case of defining its role and responsibilities, the EU has to present an adequate analysis of the threats ahead and of the instruments and means to be employed. Though the EC and the EU have developed over the last five decades a considerable set of strategies with common concepts, procedures and instruments, there are no magic, ready-made formulas, but rather specific ingredients which have to be tailor made.

The specific relevance of this region to the EU will even increase in the years to come with the accession of one and eventually all three Baltic states and Poland. New challenges of a perhaps different nature will be placed on the agenda of the enlarged Union. The need for adequate regional strategies with and towards Russia will reach a new quality. The delicate issue of reinforcing the security of the new Baltic member states without their parallel NATO membership will be difficult to handle. Thus experiences of dealing with the Northern Dimension will be useful for everyone involved – inside and outside the EU.

When it comes to strengthening stability in the region, especially in the future, the EU might have to conceive revised concepts and design a proper mix of its instruments. Being atypical, the North might even need some new kind of consideration. Such a demand is, of course, at first only a claim for a more intensive examination. While the Northern Dimension should not be an issue of its own – unrelated to other phenomena of the EU's policy – it should at the same time not be regarded simply as a foreign policy area that does not merit specific considerations.

The Northern Dimension in perspective

A case for a special mission

In a broader retrospective on the history of the European international profile, the Finnish initiative was in the end not particularly surprising: nearly all member states and most new states in particular define their role within the EU in terms of their own history and geography. Linking national and European tasks is not only or mainly pursued in terms of its positive and negative interest vis-à-vis the Union's nature and finality, but also in view of its own place in the world. Such a pursuit of one's historical role is formulated as a contribution to the role of the Union in the European and international system. Thus it is of major significance for nearly all member states to link their membership of the EU to a foreign policy vocation that also considers their relations with former colonies, geographical neighbours and cultural 'relatives'.[9] Member states claim to be a 'bridge' towards Africa, Latin America, the Mediterranean and Central and Eastern Europe. This kind of national mission for the Union as a whole serves to keep and strengthen former ties and to underline one's importance within the Union in relation to other EC states, who are supposed to accept a certain kind of natural 'de facto' leadership of the respective country in the common approaches. At the same time this, intra EU profile helps to reconcile one's own national identity with the sometimes difficult membership of the EU: The Union is then perceived as a continuation of historical and geographical concerns and missions with other means – as the support of the whole of the Union needs to be mobilised. A merging and even fusion[10] of national European perceptions and interests is then expected.

The shaping of a collective awareness

With regard to this endeavour, the respective members have to convince their colleagues from other countries and the EU institutions who have to get acquainted with the specific problems and the role the EU is to play. Specific views of one or some member states are slow to enter the collective awareness and only incrementally become part of common concerns. As perceptions of threats and common tasks undergo considerable changes, this is a continuous process. Thus it is relevant that the heads of governments have taken up the basic notion and that the European Council, in its role of defining the international profile of the EU, decided in Helsinki to install a certain review procedure.[11] Declaratory politics are certainly necessary but they will not be sufficient to anchor this dimension in the European identity. Beyond a small diplomatic circle of foreign policy actors lies a realm of public awareness and media attention which must be reached if an area is to become part of a collective responsibility.

Such a view on the international role of political entities like that of the EU is being constructed by several and different groups of actors including the media and public discourse. Though everyone would agree that this process of creating and shaping a real shared European outlook on its neighbourhood and its international system is different from the traditional ways pursued in conventional nation states,[12] there is something of a European public space in the making, in which you have to compete with your priorities and preferences as attention is a scarce resource.

In the political arena of Brussels there are clear cycles for the rise and the decline of subjects. More than in internal affairs the foreign policy agenda is influenced and shaped by external events outside the direct and immediate control of EU actors. Therefore, if a topic is of minor relevance for the news of the day

it must at least be kept on the lower ranks of the agenda in an appropriate way. The Northern Dimension should thus not only be 'discovered' as a common responsibility for the whole of the EU, but also integrated into the EU's international profile in a more permanent place.

Links to the conceptual debate

A specific contribution is offered by the academic world: it may be less visible and dramatic but in many cases it is a more lasting contribution in the long run – especially for building a European identity by a communauté de vue;[13] the success of implanting a concept into the permanent agenda cannot be measured in short terms and by just looking at newspaper articles and speeches by politicians. Research and teaching will have a long-term effect, but also need to be fed with interesting and attractive issues. One way is to link the issue with conceptual debates, thereby integrating it into the broader debate. In integrating the Northern Dimension into a broader overall approach, some lines of conceptual arguments might offer useful advice. One stimulating approach identifies several potential roles for the EU in the international system.[14] From different theoretical and political views, the EU is perceived to perform as a civilian or as a capitalistic superpower, as a regional power or a global player, as an economic giant, a political mouse, and as a military dwarf.

Behind this debate about different terms, the fundamental issue is what kind of general actor the EU is willing and able to be in the international and European environment. Clearly the overall role the EU shapes for itself will be directly affected when regions like the North are taken into consideration. Expectations that, as a civilian power with economic instruments, the EU will also influence the high politics of security and even defence in neighbouring regions is an essential part of these considerations. Thus the Northern Dimension needs to be discussed in terms of

its implications for the nature of the EU and of the international system.

But the line of argumentation also works the other way: whatever the concrete activities of the EU are or are not will incrementally contribute to the overall performance of the EU as an international actor; there are several different test cases for the EU to define its overall role by its activities or by the lack of activities. Particularly in view of a long-term low-key engagement for changing the structural conditions and shaping a peaceful overall environment, an EU policy for the North demonstrates its capabilities to look ahead and not only to react to immediate crises. With a lot of crisis management going on and with the Helsinki resolutions on military and non-military crisis management,[15] the EU will pursue a strategy of adding more 'robust' means to some of its traditional instruments. The debate on the Northern Dimension should identify its specific role within these frameworks.

Strategies for the Northern Dimension should also take into account the relevant constitutional (or treaty) and institutional provisions to deal with relevant topics on the EU's international agenda. In the EU context, its pillar structure is of major significance: with a broad range of variations in competencies provided at the European level and also in the procedures to apply them, the EU acts in a diffuse manner; as in all other real situations of the EU's external activities, the Northern Dimension has to deal with several actors in different constellations for employing a wide variety of instruments. Interpillar coherence[16] thus constitutes a considerable problem.

Again the North should not be regarded as an isolated 'victim' of these weaknesses but as a typical part of the general difficulty of the EU in playing a coherent and effective role. Thus the fate of the initiative on the Northern Dimension will also depend on the structures the EU will develop for its international role.

On our approach

The scope of this book is wider than that of the initiative as we have included all security issues in the North and the EU's policy on them. The editors of this volume saw a definite necessity to approach the new ambiguous and challenging subject adequately: proper methods of analysing the issues and of proposing reasonable policies were demanded. Given the nature of the Union's way to shape its international profile,[17] any common policy needs to be based on the preferences of its member states.

Thus the EU's concern for the Northern Security Dimension is seen as a consequence of how member states look at the problem; these perceptions are considerably influenced by the history and geography of each member state, but – interestingly enough – the views on the place of one's own state and the relevance of other regions are not fixed once and for all. Policies of the EU are thus constructed[18] by and in member states. In a political arena like the EU the views articulated in national fora will be of crucial importance – more than diplomatic declarations seem to indicate. However, if we want to move towards a deliberative democracy[19], which builds the communauté de vue step by step, a real community with shared concerns, then this exercise cannot remain isolated in a few diplomatic circles but needs a European forum – an exercise which our book wants to contribute to.

Given this relevance, a study of debates and views in the member states of the Union is highly desirable; such a perception analysis should, however, not be restricted to the most important or concerned countries. To understand the perhaps marginal relevance of the Northern Security Dimension and to conceive successful strategies of the EU as Union of all its member states, a broader survey is advisable – even if the observable traces of the attention given to this issue are minimal

in some or even quite a few member states. More interesting is the need to analyse why this part of the EU's neighbourhood appears to be out of sight.

In dealing with this demand, this volume offers a traditional and at the same time quite up-to-date approach. Being aware of the strong and weak points of asking foreign policy experts, the editors developed together with the national rapporteurs a single questionnaire to serve as a checklist.

The authors from all member states were asked to rank the Northern Dimension within the set of their foreign policy priorities. National perceptions about the role of Russia and other relevant countries in this context were to be identified. The role the EU and the respective country are supposed to play belonged to the third set of questions of the national reports.

Right from the beginning the editors were aware of the difficulties of some colleagues to offer an empirically rich and representative insight into the discourse of their country. However, if reports are limited in their substance due to a marginal role of Northern Europe in national debates about the EU and foreign policies, we also take that as a meaningful finding for our major conclusions.

Notes

[1] Speech delivered by Paavo Lipponen in Rovaniemi in September 1997.

[2] See e.g. Curt Gasteyger, *An ambiguous Power. The European Union in a Changing World*, (Gütersloh: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung, 1996).

[3] See Elfriede Regelsberger, Philippe de Schoutheete de Tervarent and Wolfgang Wessels, "From EPC to CFSP: Does Maatricht Push the EU Toward the Role as a Global Player? In dto (eds.) *Foreign Policy of the European Union. From EPC to CFSP and Beyond*, Boulder and London (Lynne Rienner) 1997, pp. 1-16; Christopher Hill, *The Actors in Europe's Foreign Policy*, London (Routledge) 1996; Jan Zielonka, *Explaining Euro-Paralysis: Why Europe is unable*

to act in International Politics, (London – New York: MacMillan Press, 1998), pp. 25-48.

[4] See Wolfgang Wessels (ed.), *National vs. EU-Foreign Policy interests. Mapping 'important' national interests*, TEPSA-report, (Cologne – Brussels, 1998) (not published).

[5] See for the term the Copenhagen summit declaration, 21../ 22.6.1993, published in Werner Weidenfeld and Wolfgang Wessels (eds.), "Jahrbuch der Europäische Integration 193/94", Bonn (Europa Union Verlag) 1994, pp. 414-435; Heinrich Schneider, "Europäische Identität: Historische, kulturelle und politische Dimensionen" in *Integration*, No. 4/1991, pp. 160-176; Werner Weidenfeld, "Die Identität Europas", (Bonn: Europa Union Verlag, 1983).

[6] See Art. J.1, J.4, 228a TEU, Horst-Günter Krenzler, Henning C. Schneider, "The Question of Consistency", in *Elfirede Regelsberger*, Philippe de Schoutheete de Tervarent and Wolfgang Wessels (eds.), *Foreign Policy of the European Union. From EPC to CFSP and Beyond*, (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 1997), pp. 1331-151.

[7] See for the term "high" and "low politics" Stanley Hoffman, "Reflections on the Nation State in Western Europe Today, in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 1 (2) 1982, pp. 21-37.

[8] See Hill 1996, op. cit; Christopher Hill, "The Capability Expectation Gap, or Conceptualizing Europe's International Role", in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, September 1993, p. 305; Jan Zielonka, op. cit.

[9] See e.g. Esther Barbé, "La política europea de España", Barcelona (Ariel) 1999; Franci Algierin and Elfriede Regelsberger (eds.), *Synergy at work. Spain and Portugal in European Foreign Policy*, (Bonn: Europa Union Verlag, 1996).

[10] See for this term Wolfgang Wessels, "An Even Closer Fusion? A Dynamic Macropolitical View on Integration Processes", in *Journal of Common Market Studies* Vol. 35, No. 2(1997), pp. 267-299.

[11] See www.ue.eu.int/de/info/eurocouncil/index.htm

[12] See Jürgen Habermas, *Die postnationale Konstellation*, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998).

[13] See e.g. Elfriede Regelsberger, Philippe de Schoutheete de Tervarent and Wolfgang Wessels, op. cit.

[14] See Francois Duchene, "Die Rolle Europas im Weltsysteme: Von der regional zur planetarischen Interdependenz", in Max Kohnstamm, Wolfgang Hager (eds.), *Zivilmacht Europa – Super-*

macht oder Partner?, (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1973), pp. 19-26, Johan Galtung, *Kapitalistische Grossmacht Europa oder die Gemeinschaft der Konzerne?*, Reinbek (Rowohlt) 1973; Hanns W. Maull, "Europa als Welmacht? Perspektiven für die Gemeinsame Aussen- und Sicherheitspolitik", in Thomas Jäger, Melanie Piepenshneidet (eds.), *Europa 2020. Szenarein politischer Entwicklung*, (Opladen: Leske & Bedrich 1997), pp. 81-95; Elfriede Regelsberger and Wolfgang Wessels, *Zero or Global Power: Perspectives for the Common Foreign and the Security Policy of the European Union*, Paper for the Center for European Studies of the Norwegian School for Management, July 1995, Wolfgang Wessels, "Die Europäische Union als Ordnunsgfaktor", in Karl Kaiser, Hans-Peter Schwarz: *Die neue Weltpolitik*, Opladen 2000 (forthcoming); Richard G. Whitman, *From civilian power to super power. The international identity of the European Union*, (Basigstoke: Macmillan, 1998).

[15] See www.ue.eu.int/de/Info/eurocouncil/index.htm

[16] See Art. 3 TEU and Helsinki summit declarations: www.ue.eu.int/de/Info/eurocouncil/index.htm

[17] See Hill 1996, op. cit.

[18] See generally Alexander Wendt, "Der Internationalstaat: Identität und Sturkturwandel in der internationalen Politik", in Ulrich Beck (ed.), *Perspektiven der Weltgesellschaft*, Frankfurt a.M. (Suhrkamp) 1998, pp. 381-410, Thomas Risse: Let's Argue: "Communicative Action in World Politics", in International Organizations 54/1, pp. 1-40.

[19] See Habermas 1998, op. cit.; Joseph H. H. Weiler, "The Transformation of Europe", in *Yale Law Journal*, 100/1995, pp. 2403-2483.

The Northern security agenda: An overall perspective

Olav F. Knudsen

The origins of the "Northern Dimension"

The European Union's engagement in the Baltic Sea region took off in earnest when the membership candidacies of Sweden and Finland were launched in 1990 and 1991. Not long after, the Baltic states were also advanced as candidates. Finnish and Swedish membership became a reality on January 1st 1995, and Europe agreements for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were signed on June 14th the same year. Now, after the Helsinki summit, the latter countries are negotiating with the EU. At an early stage, long before their actual membership, Finland and Sweden, in concert with Denmark, had sought to move the EU Commission to adopt a more comprehensive Baltic policy. The EU Council responded in May 1995 by calling for a Commission report on the "current state of and perspectives for cooperation in the Baltic Sea region". The report was presented in November 1995, providing an overview of aid and cooperation activities in the region. It promised a follow-up in the shape of "a long-term based Baltic Sea Region initiative". This was subsequently presented at the Visby Summit of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) in May 1996. It outlined measures of support for democracy and political stability, economic development, regional cooperation and measures to strengthen the role of the CBSS.[1] This work has proceeded further since the Second CBSS summit in Riga in January 1998.

Thus, the Finnish initiative on the Northern Dimension of the EU is an effort to accelerate and complement work already

begun and to give it local content and flavour. Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen launched the Northern Dimension initiative in 1997 as a way to implement a vision created several years before.[2] This was reflected in the opening address to the conference on "The Northern Dimension of the CFSP" in November 1997 when Jaakko Blomberg, Under-Secretary of State in the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said:

> "Looking back to the assessments made by the Finnish Government during the accession process, two aspects of the Northern Dimension stand out. On the one hand, Finland – together with Sweden, and reinforcing the Danish contribution – was to bring into the Union Nordic political and social values and Nordic models of policy-making and conflict resolution. On the other, with Finland's accession, the Union was to acquire a common border with Russia, which Finland pledged to keep secure as well as to make into a gateway for supportive cooperation with the new and democratic neighbour."[3]

The Northern Dimension is also often described as a strategy for the EU's relations with non-EU countries in the northern region. It is important, however, to note the proviso made by the Finnish Government that the Northern Dimension does not cover the military aspects of security. We are dealing with a policy doctrine aiming to handle security problems in the wider sense without directly addressing military issues.

During the late 1990s the Finnish government promoted the Northern Dimension policy in common foreign and security contexts within EU policymaking. The Finnish initiative received broad – though initially vague – political support within the EU as well as from the Russian Federation. Other actors in the region, e.g. Iceland, Norway and the EU's candidate members Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, and the Nordic

Council, also gave general endorsement. The true extent and depth of this support, however, was not clearly evident.

In a broader perspective, the non-military element of the Northern Dimension initiative must be handled with some analytical alertness: military forces are clearly not absent in the region. While the Northern Dimension as a policy does not deal with these aspects, the analysis of this policy cannot exclude the possibility that its intended effects are designed to include even ramifications for the military side of things. The security of the region in the wider sense is certainly under scrutiny here. For this reason, the perspective adopted in this analysis includes the "harder" portion of the security spectrum as much as the "softer" portion. With these prefatory remarks in mind, let us now move on to more substantial matters.

During 1998 and 1999 in particular, it became increasingly clear that the Northern Dimension overlapped in fruitful ways with other efforts to develop the EU's external policies. The relationship to Russia and the crisis-management aspects of the CFSP were central to this process of change. At the June 1999 summit in Cologne the efforts to concretise the Northern Dimension were re-endorsed as a "suitable basis for raising the European Union´s profile in the region." In the words of the summit conclusions, "... [t]he Northern Dimension is conceived as a way of working with the countries of the region to increase prosperity, security and resolutely combat dangers such as environmental pollution, nuclear risks and cross-border organised crime". The Council indicated that an action plan might be a possible next step, following the conference planned for November 1999. Given the agreed guidelines, it was time to achieve a closer involvement of the acceding countries concerned, the Russian Federation, Norway and Iceland.[4]

Also relevant to the work on the Northern Dimension was the adoption of the "Common Strategy of the European Union on Russia of 4 June 1999", outlining a number of more specific

ways in which the relations between the EU and Russia would be developed and coordinated with the activites under the Northern Dimension heading. These measures also included security aspects in the narrower sense, though the measures considered were less specific in this than in other areas. Above all, it involved the consideration of possible new institutional mechanisms to structure the relationship on political and security dialogue, non-proliferation issues, particularly chemical weapons destruction, and the safe management of chemical, biological and fissile materials. On regional and cross-border cooperation, the link to the Northern Dimension was specifically mentioned. The Secretary-General of the Council, the High Representative for the CFSP, was designated to assist the Council in the implementation of the four-year strategy, to begin in January 2000:

– Secure a stable and peaceful development encompassing all EU members and non-members of the northern region. That means *inter alia*, dealing with cases of conflict, such as the simmering ones between Russia and Estonia and Latvia;

– realise EU membership expansion in the region (Estonia Latvia, Lithuania and Poland);

– establish throughout the Union understanding and acceptance of the significance of the stability and harmony of the Northern region for the EU as a whole, including the benefits as well as the costs involved and an understanding as to how the latter are to be covered;

– raise the level of EU representation and activity in all northern regional and sub-regional bodies;

– develop and routinise the EU – Russia relationship, and ensure its compatibility with Baltic and Polish membership;

– raise the ability of the present northern members to spearhead the EU's engagement in the northern region – and find access to EU funding.

No less significant in the new development of the European

Union's policies at Cologne was the strong impact of the events in Kosovo and the lack of an independent European capability to deal with that crisis. The conclusions of the summit were accordingly direct, even dramatic:

> "... we are convinced that the Council should have the ability to take decisions on the full range of conflict prevention and crisis management tasks defined in the Treaty on European Union, the "Petersberg tasks". To this end, the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises without prejudice to actions by NATO. The EU will thereby increase its ability to contribute to international peace and security in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter."

The Cologne conclusions continued by identifying the steps the Union intended to take in order to reach its new goals:

> "We are now determined to launch a new step in the construction of the European Union. To this end we ask the General Affairs Council to prepare the conditions and the measures necessary to achieve these objectives, including the definition of the modalities for the inclusion of those functions of the WEU which will be necessary for the EU to fulfil its new responsibilities in the area of the Petersberg tasks. In this regard, our aim is to take the necessary decisions by the end of the year 2000. In that event, the WEU as an organisation would have completed its purpose. The different status of Member States with regard to collective defence guarantees will not be affected. The Alliance remains the foundation of the collective defence of its Member States. We therefore invite the Finnish

> Presidency to take the work forward within the General Affairs Council on the basis of this declaration and the report of the Presidency to the European Council meeting in Cologne. We look forward to a progress report by the Finnish Presidency to the Helsinki European Council meeting."

And from the Presidency Report on Strengthening of the Common European Policy on Security and Defence:

> " ...The focus of our efforts therefore would be to assure that the European Union has at its disposal the necessary capabilities (including military capabilities) and appropriate structures for effective EU decision making in crisis management within the scope of the Petersberg tasks. This is the area where a European capacity to act is required most urgently. The development of an EU military crisis management capacity is to be seen as an activity within the framework of the CFSP (Title V of the TEU) and as a part of the progressive framing of a common defence policy in accordance with Article 17 of the TEU. The Atlantic Alliance remains the foundation of the collective defence of its Members. The commitments under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty and Article V of the Brussels Treaty will in any event be preserved for the Member States party to these Treaties. The policy of the Union shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States."

The Finnish Presidency advanced these developments further and concluded the Helsinki summit with the adoption of a new crisis management plan, now taking shape as the full-fledged Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP), with target levels for a common crisis management

force to be achieved by 2003.

Relations in the North European region have for several years been marked by a complex combination of cooperation and conflict. The outer security framework is not in doubt. The affairs of the region are nested within the broad, all-European cooperative structures of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Euro-Atlantic Council for Partnership (EACP). At the same time, from 1990 The Treaty on Conventional Forces (CFE) in Europe became the cornerstone for the military security of Europe as a whole. The treaty has a particularly important role in the relations of the northern region. Its revision in November 1999 was a significant step towards securing – for the longer term – the stability previously achieved. One reading of the EU's concerns in the northern region goes as follows: In addition, it is necessary to develop and routinise the NATO – Russia relationship, and to coordinate this with the development of the military dimension of the EU as envisaged in the decisions of the Cologne and Helsinki summits of 1999. These developments pose a definite challenge to the Northern Dimension initiative, and the Helsinki summit in December 1999 has gone part of the way towards answering that challenge.

The actors in the North

It may be appropriate to distinguish between actors geographically located within the region of Northern Europe, and actors not so located but still active participants in regional politics. Moreover, EU members are distinguished from non-EU members.

Northern EU members are Denmark, Finland, Germany, and Sweden, along with the applicant states Estonia, Poland, Latvia and Lithuania. The EU Commission itself is also a significant

actor on this stage. Non-EU members in the northern region are Russia/Belarus, Ukraine, Iceland, and Norway. NATO and the United States are also actors in the Northern region. More intermittently, the United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands take part in Baltic Sea regional affairs.

The actors may be further grouped according to their alignment. Two EU member states in the region, Finland and Sweden, describe themselves as militarily non-aligned. The full implications of this characterisation have not yet been established, a fact which remains central to the problematique of their role in regional security. Sweden has offered some further clarification by declaring that only Sweden will defend Sweden in a military confrontation, and that Sweden defends nobody but Sweden in such a case. Finland has not made a corresponding statement. Both have declared that NATO membership is not on their agenda for now; both also reserve their right to change their position and opt for alignment/ alliance if they so choose. 'Neutrality' is avoided as a policy concept in the official parlance of both states. One of the key underlying questions which remains concerns the role that will be played in the future by actors remaining militarily non-aligned in the Baltic Sea region, and what political utility the distinction between 'military' and 'non-military' will have in the future of EU security policy.

Finland remains the actor with the greatest practical experience in dealing with Russia, both diplomatically, politically and commercially. Finnish and Baltic interests overlap securitywise while being in competition commercially. In the eyes of some they may even be competing in security terms. The chief security interest of Finland is now widely seen to be to integrate as closely as possible into the European Union, perhaps most solidly evidenced in its membership in the European Monetary Union (EMU). A challenge for Finland is nevertheless how to secure its political anchorage among the

Nordic EU members while serving as central interlocutor between Moscow and Brussels. The all-round political weight of Sweden within the EU is considerable. Finnish-Swedish policy cooperation has been close in recent years, but albeit turbulent, and not without reason. Finland's expertise in dealing with Russia and the Finnish enthusiasm for Brussels are not easily combined with Sweden's leading political role in the EU's North and the EU-scepticism of the Swedish population, which constrains the Swedish government from claiming a full leadership role.

In addition to being Northern EU members, Denmark and Germany are also members of NATO, and as such may be said to represent NATO in regional affairs. This also means representing the region inside NATO. Norway, though not an EU member, is in a similar position. The interests and resources of these states are rather different, however, even if they are united by a common desire to ensure the stable and peaceful development of the region.

Denmark's military resources are limited. Denmark's role within NATO was long restrained by domestic political opposition, which came to a close, however, when the Cold War ended. The Soviet withdrawal opened the Baltic Sea region to a new Danish policy of drawing the Baltic states as closely as possible to NATO, and thus for a more active role of Denmark within NATO. The Danish government initiated the new forms of military cooperation, which currently tie the three Baltic States to the Nordic countries and indirectly to NATO. This process began with the initiation of bilateral military cooperation agreements between the Baltic states and Denmark. Among the five member countries in the Nordic Council, Denmark is the only one to be a member of both NATO and the EU. Denmark has also initiated the programme of military cooperation between Germany, Poland and itself. A central question for Denmark is how it utilises this central position

among smaller states in the region to bring together diverging views, rather than play the lone ranger. However, Denmark's continuing refusal to join the WEU is a major handicap in this respect, now that the WEU is being transformed into the centre of security and defence policy-making within the European Union. This is one area where a major policy shift may be anticipated before too long – at least the pressure on the Danish government to do so is heavy at the time of writing.

Germany's regional role is defined partly by its status as a leading European power in NATO and partly by its history of dominating the Baltic Sea region in the past. The historical legacy has weighed heavily on German policymaking. It influences the German approach to Russia – which may be briefly summarised as "preserve friendship, avoid provocation" – as well as the German appreciation of Poland's new function in the geopolitical landscape, as an "easternmost bastion" of NATO. Germany has had the opportunity to lead the way in developing new forms of cooperation in the Baltic Sea region, but has not chosen to do so, preferring rather to go along and play the part of an ordinary, co-equal participant in the cooperative process. Within the EU, Germany has traditionally been seen as the great power representing the "interests of the North". That puts the Federal Republic in a key position as a potential coordinating link between the cooperative processes of the Northern region, the CFSP, and the sometimes diverging policies of the leading EU powers, as exemplified by the Trilateral Summits (Russia, France, Germany). It is also relevant to ask whether – given support for such an idea among the other regional EU members – the German profile and activity level in the Northern region should perhaps be stepped up.

Norway's role in the northern region is largely determined by the location of its coastline and the fact that the adjacent seas contain its chief resources and preoccupations: gas, oil, and fish. The Baltic Sea is something of a theoretical notion to a country

focusing its attention on the North Sea, the Norwegian Sea, the North Atlantic and the Barents. Moreover, as a self-determined non-member of the EU, Norway has placed itself somewhat on the margin of joint policy making for Northern Europe. Accordingly, since the failed EU-referendum of 1994, NATO and the new, broader conceptions of security have been embraced by Norwegian policymakers as a way of compensating for Norway's EU-problem. The broad security agenda, embracing (at least on paper) even the environment and social conditions, gave Norway a chance to hitch a ride with the rebounding influence of the new NATO. This strategy was partly premised on the continued independent existence of the Western European Union, of which Norway was only an associate member. In Norwegian post-1994 thinking, a merger of the Western European Union (WEU) and the EU was to be avoided at all costs. Hence, the incorporation of the WEU into the EU structure as of 2000 means a further reduction of Norwegian influence on policymaking for security in the North of Europe.

Beyond NATO and its diplomacy of peace, Norway's political priority is Russia, reflected in the fact that the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) was created on a Norwegian initiative to tie Russia cooperatively together with its Arctic neighbours.[5] Since 1996, Norway has gradually raised the priority accorded to the Baltic Sea area in its policymaking, yet it still remains decidedly secondary. Not unlike its European Economic Area (EEA) partner Iceland, therefore, Norway mostly plays third fiddle in the North European ensemble.[6]

Russia is the major power of the Northern region, militarily and politically, and potentially also economically. Russia has joined new cooperative ventures in the northern region on a broad scale ever since the end of the Cold War. Russian links to the EU and (despite Kosovo) NATO are being institutionalised and are now in the process of being put to work on cooperative substance, with the EU link decidedly leading the way. The place

of the Kaliningrad oblast in regional cooperation would seem to have great potential and is poorly developed. In security affairs, the revised CFE Treaty is a fundamental defining prescription for stable Russian relations with NATO. However, in security affairs Russia prefers working through the OSCE rather than NATO and its affiliated bodies.

Poland's role in the northern region is already heavily marked by its NATO membership and future membership of the EU, which is fundamentally altering Polish perspectives and policies. Poland has made a good start in seeking a reformed bilateral relationship to Moscow. The transition and development of Kaliningrad is a central bilateral issue with potential regional spin-off effects. Given the past, it is vitally important for future stability to observe how Poland's new relationship to Russia is worked out within the EU and NATO institutional links. Polish understanding with Lithuania has particular significance in this connection. Historically, in the triangle constituted by Russia, Poland, and Lithuania, the conflict between the latter two has often been exploited by Russia, while the Poland-Russia rivalry has been used by Lithuania to its own advantage .

All three Baltic states are on their way to becoming integrated into the EU, though Estonia seems likely to complete the process before the other two. Lithuania stabilised its bilateral relationship with Russia with the border agreement of October 1997, but in the absence of ratification normalisation remains suspended. Latvia has for several years been unfairly targeted by Russian pressure politics, but is thereby also reaping the harvest of an improvident minorities policy. The clarification of prospective EU membership for Latvia and Lithuania at the Helsinki summit in 1999 has improved the outlook for political stability in the region. Estonia already seems to have reaped the benefits of the EU's political umbrella in dealing with Russia. Such effects could now extend even to the other two Baltic

states, whith Latvia being in particular need of external stabilisation. Further on the horizon hangs the question of Baltic NATO membership. Finding adequate alternatives to that option may be one of the key challenges for constructive regional diplomacy.

The United States has been a mainstay of politico-diplomatic support for the three Baltic states ever since the Cold War and continues to play this role. At present, the Baltic Charter of 1998 sets out the main guidelines for US relations with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Examination of this document, its antecedents and the context reveal what has long been evident, namely that the US government sets limits as to how far it is willing to go in support of the security of the Baltic states. On the other hand, the cooperation of Nordic and NATO partners is systematically drawn upon in US policy, and the accent is decidedly on the positive, seeking multiple ways to draw the Baltic states into the European and Transatlantic community of states.[7] The Nordic states have not yet fully clarified their somewhat bounded enthusiasm for the US policy and their own role in regional security in that connection. The question of the future role of the US in the security cooperation of the Northern European region is inextricably tied to that of NATO, the EACP and the Partnership for Peace (PfP), which are further considered below. At the turn of the millennium, the US role is also more clearly than ever linked to its relationship to the EU, given the development of the EU military dimension with the integration of the WEU into the EU as such.

The issues in the North

It may have been said before, but is worth repeating that the affairs of the Northern region are still to a considerable extent characterised by overhang – if not hangovers – from the Cold

War. Healing the wounds and putting relations on a new footing for new generations are neglected tasks. They cannot without risk be shunted aside with reference to 'the needs of the future'. Recent European experience in the Balkans demonstrates that while time may occasionally heal a wound left untended, it may just as easily leave it festering. In oher wors, northern regional affairs are not entirely stable and may even erupt in conflict unless tended carefully.

We may consider issues of substance under the headings of hard security and soft. Many of the actual cases have already in one way or another been referred to above.

The line between hard and soft security is not particularly distinct. Although hard security is usually understood as that which is based on military resources, the many possible non-combat uses of military resources clutter up the picture. We shall reserve the term hard security here for the use of military combat resources and the precautionary measures taken or considered to restrict their use. Soft security then becomes concerned with all other issues relating to military resources as well as all non-military security measures.

Hard security

During the past fifty years, relations in military affairs within the northern region were entirely encapsulated in Cold War diplomacy. That is to say, inter-Nordic cooperation, always active during this period, hardly ever extended to the area of security and defence. In these matters, relations were strictly formal, and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) was the only framework in which the Nordic and indeed Northern states could associate more freely, if still quite formally. Here, various confidence and security building measures were worked out during the latter part of the Cold War, continuing into the 1990s. These measures – aided by

Russian unilateral withdrawals from Eastern Europe – started to change the old pattern. The CFE Treaty was part of this process.

This Treaty, agreeing to significantly reduce and put under surveillance five categories of ground fighting equipment,[8] was concluded between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in 1990 and implemented between 1992 and 1996, with some Russian delays authorised until 1999. The CFE Treaty has had a rather special role in the relations of the Northern region, in part because of its flank feature which restricts the freedom of deployments in the far northwest and the far southeast (Norway and Turkey), in part because five states in the region are not signatories[9] and thus only implicitly part of the regime. The revision of the treaty (completed in November 1999) has brought it into line with the post-Cold War setting and an expanded NATO. The possibility that one or more of the five Northern non-CFE members may accede to the Treaty is one of the intriguing aspects of the politics surrounding the Treaty as it enters its second decade.

The role of Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs) in the region has not been developed to its maximum potential. The main obstacle to regional arrangements is the preservation of a 'genuine link' between the regional level and the all-European level. Several states in the region object to any military arrangement, which is not part of an all-European agreement.

Russia has proposed to the Baltic states and other states in the region (October 1997) the negotiation of specific CSBMs for the Baltic Sea region. These proposals have not been followed up, nor have they been rejected. It will be natural to pursue such proposals in a wider setting be it the EACP or OSCE. However, Finland and Sweden in their 1998 non-paper on Baltic Sea regional security offered this:

> "...without delay, to go beyond the mandatory provisions of the 1994 Vienna Document and raise unilaterally our

> respective passive quotas for evaluation visits with one evaluation visit each, and for inspections with one inspection each. We make this offer, on the basis of interest and reciprocity, to each of our neighbours Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Russia."[10]

The Finnish and Swedish position may have helped to bring the work on CSBMs in the region a step forward. Finnish and Swedish ideas in the non-paper seek a more integrated perspective on the assorted initiatives and uncoordinated aspects of regional security cooperation in the Baltic Sea area. The revised Vienna Document of 1999 (Istanbul summit) reflects a number of advances, some of which are due to the Nordic efforts.

Soft security

There are two fundamentally different sets of issues connected with soft security. One consists of the overt tasks themselves and their implementation and performance. Examples include the improvement of the environment, the reinvigoration of economically depressed areas, etc. These in turn lead to clear-cut but difficult questions about who carries out the decisions of the international bodies concerned and with what means (not least budgetary), how the division of labour between various bodies is to be organised, exactly what missions relating to a given task are part of the domain of the international bodies and which are not, etc.

The other set of issues is the continuing underlying argument which has existed since the later years of the Cold War, regarding the concept of soft security and the "philosophy" it implies. The origins of the concept are less than clear. Suffice it to say that we are not dealing with an analytical concept at all, but rather with a

term which has suited – and pleased - politicians and policy-makers since the late 1980s because it carries the connotation of a non-traditional (non-military) approach to security. At the heart of this set of issues is the question of the place of the military in soft security. Here the argument that the military needs to be contained and kept out of soft security stands against the argument that the military needs to be re-employed and re-trained for non-traditional (i.e., "soft") military missions.[11] This debate has – thus far – neither come to a conclusion nor entirely died down.

The primary instruments of soft security have been the organisations for cooperation on non-military issues. In the North European region these are primarily the long-existing bodies of Nordic cooperation (the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers) and the corresponding bodies among the Baltic states.

The Nordic institutions are relevant to the soft security of the region for two main reasons. Firstly, they have reorganised their activities since the end of the Cold War to incorporate relations with neighbouring regions which were previously off-limits to them. In particular, this has meant that Nordic relations with Northwest Russia and the Baltic states have been dealt with by special programmes worked out in a standing committee for "neighbourhood issues". Secondly, the Nordic institutions have, for the first time since their inception in the 1950s, been allowed to deal with issues of foreign and security policy. In the annual sessions of the Nordic Council there are now debates and opportunities for parliamentarians to make recommendations to the Nordic Foreign Ministers' Meetings or the Nordic Defence Ministers' Meetings, which are the formal bodies of joint action. Generally, as compared with the other institutions named above, the Nordic institutions also have the advantage that they are formally institutionalised with executive bodies and a permanent secretariat, which allow them to operate more

independently.

Reference should also be made to the cooperative mechanisms set up under the US-Baltic Charter[12] in which Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and the United States collaborate on a number of economic and political issues of common interest. Furthermore, the three Baltic states have cooperative bodies amongst themselves, the Baltic Council, the Baltic Council of Ministers and the Baltic Assembly which cover in large part the same issue areas as the Nordic cooperative bodies.

The organisations of the region mentioned so far are probably the most firmly institutionalised. In terms of soft security there are, however, other bodies in Northern Europe which have their own significance more for political reasons – primarily because that they include Russia as a member state. Their formal status, however, is more tenuous inasmuch as they have no basis in a legally binding agreement.

The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) was formed in 1992 on the basis of a political declaration – the Copenhagen Declaration – and has Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden, and the European Commission as its member states. Its working areas are 1) assistance for new democratic institutions, 2) economic and technological assistance and co-operation, 3) humanitarian matters and health, 4) environment and energy, 5) culture, education, tourism and information, 6) transport and communication.[13] Its mission has occasionally bordered on hard security issues, as in the case of environmental safety relating to the nuclear reactor from Soviet times dismantled at Paldiski in Estonia. Still, its members have drawn a "line in the sand" to keep the CBSS out of hard security.

The BEAC is a cooperative venture focused on the needs of the far-northern counties of its member countries, which are Denmark (Greenland), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia and Sweden. The Commission of the European Union is also a full

member. The BEAC deals with issues relating to "...economy, trade, science and technology, tourism, the environment, infrastructure, educational and cultural exchange as well as the improvement of the situation of the indigenous peoples in the North". Even health issues and youth cooperation have been added to the agenda.[14]

The Arctic Council describes itself thus: "The main activities of the Council focus on the protection of the Arctic environment and sustainable development as a means of improving the economic, social and cultural well-being of the north."[15] Its member states are Canada, Denmark-Faroe Islands-Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States. Most of its activities are carried out through working groups of experts.

Beyond these soft-security institutions of the North there are also a number of institutions active in the borderline region between soft and hard security.

Nordic-Baltic military co-operation

The military cooperation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania with the Nordic countries and associated partners began as reported with a Danish bilateral initiative. Presently, the various parts of this multilateral cooperation are organised as projects of limited duration under the aegis of the Ministries of Defence. Each project has a Baltic headquarters and is overseen by a steering group chaired by a Nordic or Western partner. BALTBAT is a joint Baltic peacekeeping battalion, based in Latvia. BALTRON is a naval cooperation project based in Lithuania. BALTNET is a short-term project to create an airspace control network for the sub-region, based in Estonia, as is BALTDEFCOL, the military Staff College for the training of Baltic, Nordic and other Western officers. BALTSEA is the name for the overall coordinating group for all of these projects, meeting regularly in connection with the

semi-annual Nordic-Baltic Defence Ministers meetings.

All of these groups have significant participation beyond the Nordic and Baltic – and none of them have Russian participation. While the latter aspect may be seen to raise some question of openness and access, the objectives and the mode of work in these projects have fostered low-key, practical cooperation serving as integrative stepping-stones for cooperative security in the region. In 2000 several of these projects are due to expire. Political support for their continuation is not guaranteed. Extending, coordinating or replacing these projects with activities under the PfP and the EACP may provide a useful stabilising network for the longer term.

Partnership for Peace (PfP) and
Euro Atlantic Council for Partnership (EACP)

The conduct of joint exercises under PfP auspices, especially multilateral ones with Russian participation, is an ambition of several years' standing in the region. It has taken some time to get it off the ground, and the Kosovo intervention of 1999 has all but brought this work to a standstill. On the other hand, it is possible that the role of the militarily non-aligned states in the region could serve as problem solvers in this connection. Clearly, any NATO initiative *vis-à-vis* Russia will have to overcome the psychological stumbling block, which bedevils Moscow's relations with the western alliance. The EACP, furthermore, has the added disadvantage *vis-à-vis* Russia that it seems to be in some ways a competitor to the OSCE.

Russian-Baltic relationship

Regarding present conflict, the main divisions are found between Russia and the three Baltic states. Border agreements between Estonia and Russia and Latvia and Russia have been

negotiated, but remain unsigned due to Russian objections to finalisation. The Russian-Lithuanian Treaty has long awaited ratification. Issues connected with diverging interpretations of history are also irritants which continue to cause intermittent disruptions of relations between Russia and the three Baltic states.

The conclusion of the Lithuanian-Russian border agreement in October 1997 signifies how easy it is to misinterpret diplomatic events in the region if taken out of context. The border agreement with Lithuania was seen by the rest of Europe as a sign of improved Baltic-Russian relations, yet was used by Russia as a wedge to split the Baltic states. It is a matter of record that Lithuania has been generous to its russophone minority. Then why – in the Russian argument – cannot the other Baltic states follow suit? *Vis-à-vis* Estonia and Latvia, Russia therefore takes the view that the border agreements can only be finalised when other bilateral issues are satisfactorily solved, above all the treatment of the russophone minorities. The Russian diplomatic dispute with Latvia in the spring of 1998 negatively affected the ambience in the region more generally and presaged the colder climate prevailing as the century drew to a close. Russian internal politics is also an essential part of the context. Important players on the political scene in Moscow have vowed never to let the treaty with Lithuania be ratified. At the time of writing (early 2000) it remains unratified. In short, the show of amity in October 1997 when the treaty was signed was only superficially indicative of better relations.

Clearly, the cooperative structures that are available in the Baltic Sea region have been poorly utilised. The insistence of Russia on keeping these matters within a bilateral frame with the Baltic states has complicated attempts at resolution. At the same time, the close connection between Latvian politics and international politics has been amply illustrated in this case. Many Latvian politicians have shown insufficient

understanding of the broader political context in which they operate.

The Kaliningrad exclave touches relations between the Russian Federation on the one hand and Lithuania and Poland on the other. The status of the exclave as such is beyond question and is not an issue of conflict. But the matter of access (the Russian desire for a regularised land access route via Lithuania or Poland), the military concentration and the continuing lack of a clear decision regarding attempts to develop the oblast economically, make Kaliningrad a potential topic for future disputes.

The russophone minorities raise issues which have long since become politicised. There seems to be little substance to earlier Russian claims that the minorities are exceptional hardship cases or victims of human rights violations.[16] On the other hand, the charges that naturalisation laws are applied with excessive rigour, and that language requirements have been needlessly tough, find a sympathetic ear in many European countries. Both Latvia and Estonia have sought to tighten their language laws and have had extended dialogues with EU representatives as well as the OSCE, in which the latter have sought more liberal solutions. Their most significant results have been achieved in Latvia. The Latvians have also been under strong pressure from Russia over minority issues more broadly conceived. In March 1998 a Russian-speaking pensioners' demonstration in downtown Riga, organised without the requisite permission from the police, blocked traffic and was broken up by police with batons. [17]

This set off a sequence of further anti-Russian incidents in Latvia, to which the Russian government decided to react with economic measures designed to force a change in Latvia's policy, *inter alia* by halting Russian oil exports shipped through the Latvian port of Ventspils.[18] Even a year and a half later, hostility lingered in the Russian State Duma, which received Latvia's

latest concession – the final passage of the revised Latvian language law (modified to accommodate EU and OSCE criticism) – by authorising sanctions against Latvia. In the Russian view, Latvia's compromise did not go far enough.

Linked to the minority issues, yet still a distinct category, are the legacies – especially in Latvia and Lithuania – of participation in the *Holocaust* and the persisting signs of indifference in these countries today to such facts, evident in the slow progress of efforts to prosecute those who may have been responsible.

More substantive issues include the implications of Northern and Baltic memberships of the EU for the region and the EU itself. Since 1995 the Baltic Sea region has begun a gradual transition towards becoming an internal sea of the European Union. This affects first and foremost the region's relations with Russia, but also its internal dealings among the EU members. Both may be expected to become regularised, institutionalised and somewhat bureaucratised – while also experiencing a sizeable increase in the amount and variety of trans-societal contact. However, the process of transition itself towards that state is, politically speaking, a most sensitive part. In this regard, it must be recognised that bilateral relations with Russia must be adjusted to EU relations with Russia – and *vice versa*, taking account of the NATO role as well.

The role of neutrality

On the CFSP, it needs to be recognised in an analytical context (a) that the EU is both a collective and a group of 15 individual states of quite diverse power stature; and (b) that the CFSP is in many respects a prettifying label for common external objectives which the EU commission shares with coalitions of key smaller members and perhaps one or two great powers, while the latter reserve for themselves the practice of having other objectives

which are not necessarily compatible with those of the CFSP. After the significant steps taken at St Malo in late 1998, the EU, absorbing WEU, is now on its way to becoming an actor in its own right even on the security scene. Former NATO Secretary General Javier Solana has been appointed "Mr. PESC". Yet one should bear in mind that the EU's status as a full-fledged political actor cannot be achieved by self-declaration. Only when other significant actors show by their behaviour that they do regard the self-proclaimed actor as a real actor has the change come about.

CFSP efforts in the northern region are largely focused on the CBSS and the Barents Euro-Arctic Region. The CFSP also pays considerable attention to the EU's anticipated eastward expansion. While the role of the CFSP continues to be restricted by its competition with the classical bilateral diplomacy of France, Germany and the United Kingdom, the advances in the crisis management machinery have perhaps reduced these obstacles to a concerted EU role *vis-à-vis* the outside. The integration of WEU and its Petersberg tasks in the Amsterdam framework has now been settled. This is a major step forward in shaping future security relations in the northern region. Still, the brave, new world we can now see taking shape in European security must not prematurely be taken for granted. The United States, Russia, Japan and China may have added Javier Solana to their telephone list, but in the intermediate term they are likely to continue to call Berlin, London, and Paris whenever something significant is to be discussed.

Ireland was quietly tolerated as a self-declared neutral within the European Community ever since 1973, probably above all because it made little or no difference to EC policy. As Austria prepared to join, however, the EC was asked for an opinion in 1989 and some rather negative signals came forth. It subsequently became the EC and EU's indisputable standpoint that there is no room for a policy of neutrality in the traditional

sense within the framework of EC/EU cooperation. (The subsequent additions of the Maastricht Treaty and the Amsterdam Treaty have further stressed the expectation that there will in due course be a common defence policy for the Union.) The permanent neutrality of Austria being a constitutional matter, this issue has not yet been resolved in relations between Vienna and Brussels.

The Finnish and Swedish solution to the challenge posed by the EU's position on this issue, namely to tone down the neutrality aspect, was easier for a while because it was not such a fixed part of their constitutional set-up in either country. The incorporation of the WEU in the EU has driven something of a wedge between the two. Finland insists it has no difficulty while Sweden says the new EU profile does not conflict with Swedish non-alignment. Thus, there is a continuing unresolved question of neutrality in the actual practice of the EU member states in the northern region.

Since early in its post-soviet history, Russia has expressed preferences for the continuing existence of neutral or non-aligned states along its western borders. Russian aversion to sharing borders with NATO countries has apparently become an argument in itself, despite the fact that Russia has shared borders with NATO members Norway and Turkey throughout the Cold War and continues to do so with Norway even today – without appreciable problems. Nevertheless, Russian policy has occasionally sought to encourage the option of neutrality, or "non-bloc statu", as it has often come to be called. With the decision to extend NATO membership to former Warsaw Pact countries in 1997, Russian efforts in this direction were stepped up. Finland and Sweden were urged to solidify their non-alignment into something more permanent.[19] Evidently, these suggestions were rejected, but the Russian preference is still there.

A 2nd NATO expansion round? Or ...?

The question of a possible second round of NATO expansion continues to hover over northern regional politics. There is not much enthusiasm among many European NATO governments for the idea of a second round. Even if this reticence leads only to a postponement, in the meantime there will be a zone with some characteristics of a *de facto* non-aligned zone in the North – consisting of Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – between the Russia/Belarus union and NATO. The states in this zone will, of course, be tied in many ways cooperatively to NATO through Partnership for Peace agreements and memberships of the EACP. In this respect it will not be a simple case of non-alignment.

On the other hand, assuming that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania do not change their present policies of seeking NATO membership, the anomaly will persist of having states in the region with unfulfilled alliance ambitions, in itself a considerable element of instability. This raises the question of whether the Baltic states might come round to considering some adjustment of their policies – perhaps as part of an agreed broader settlement in which major powers take an active part. As is well known, former Russian President Boris Yeltsin raised the matter of multilateral guarantees of the Baltic states' security in October 1997. Though quickly rejected by the addressees, the open-ended, indefinite character of those Russian suggestions would seem to make them useful for constructive discussion and further exploration.

The alternative would be to let present Baltic policies continue. With Polish, Czech and Hungarian memberships of NATO, the security landscape of East Central Europe has obviously changed. New relationships are being worked out between the new NATO members and their neighbouring states Slovakia, Ukraine and not least Russia/Belarus. Ssooner or later

that will, in turn, place the role and mutual relationships of the OSCE and the EACP on the agenda. In this connection, clarity and organisational tidiness will be pitted against considerations of power and stability and the possible utility of overlapping functions.

Nordic strategies

The joining of three of the five Nordic countries in the framework of the European Union opens up new opportunities for stabilising the Northern region with political confidence-building measures going beyond those on the military side (cf. the Vienna Document of 1999). Strategies should be developed in close coordination with the EU Commission to make sure that no divergences or splits ensue between the northern region and the rest of the Union. The CBSS could be a promising vehicle for promoting closer and more trustful relations between all the littoral states. The participation of the EU Commission in its work gives it added European political weight. Finding concrete projects to manifest the spirit of cooperation is already a well-developed technique in the BEAC and the CBSS.

Another strategy for building confidence in the North while drawing on the EU would be to promote the EU-Russia link while having the Nordics play an active role in it. Northern countries may also want to further an EU role in OSCE and peacekeeping contexts. The crisis management function seems to be the most dynamic security context in which a Nordic role can have constructive effects. The changes in the EU institutional setup may facilitate a new Nordic consensus in the EU. The three Nordic sceptics when it comes to increasing the EU's capacity to act – Denmark, Sweden and Finland – who still disagree on essentials, may find themselves in the same boat.

It was characteristic that when the other Nordic countries endorsed the Finnish initiative on the Northern Dimension, it

was not without debate and dissent. Nordic disagreements extend to questions of how to handle their diverging interests and policies *vis-à-vis* Russia and the Baltic states. Different geopolitical situations explain much. Different alignments explain much of the rest. Insufficient experience of security cooperation is another cause. Recent years of fledgling security cooperation among the Nordic states – *inter alia* the projects of cooperation with the Baltic states – have demonstrated repeated failures of Nordic communication and coordination, leading to disruptive – though minor – policy conflicts.

Nordic institutions (the Nordic Council, and the Nordic Council of Ministers) have been pioneers in promoting cooperation with the Baltic states and Northwest Russia, encouraging a common Nordic pattern in organizing programs of assistance. Subsequently the so-called 5+3 cooperation has enabled the coordination since 1996 of policies in most governmental sectors by bringing together the five Nordic ministers concerned with their three Baltic counterparts. These efforts raise the question of whether and how to bring such cooperation onto a more stable organisational platform in the future, while retaining the overall EU framework as the main frame of policy reference.

Different challenges caused by Russia

To its neighbours, Russia poses essentially two kinds of challenges. One category is that of intentional policy moves designed to improve Russia's international position. Another is the indirect and unintentional effects on contiguous areas of change taking place within Russia itself.

Generally speaking, Russia has declared ambitions to recoup as much as possible of its loss of status since 1989, and to avoid any further loss of territory. Such sentiments and ambitions also

shape Russia's relations with the three Baltic states, making them a litmus test[20] for the improvement of regional cooperative security. Russian conduct *vis-à-vis* Latvia in 1998 might profitably be reviewed by all interested parties as an instructive case to ponder more helpful modes and channels of cooperation to handle future differences.

The dependence of Russia's neighbours on transit trade and energy supplies is not necessarily a problem as long as Russia does not exploit it for political ends. But the obvious impossibility of making this dependence balanced indicates the importance of joint conduct among EU members to discourage any thought of political pressure. For states not members of the EU, of course, that leaves a potential problem.

It is an inescapable fact, preventing full normalisation of regional affairs, that Russian policies of the past (i.e., Soviet policies) heavily influence current expectations and attitudes of other states in the region. Regardless of whether threats are uttered, they are perceived. When they are expressed – as in Stockholm in October 1999, so much the worse. Therefore, a decision by Russia to use multilateral frameworks – rather than bilateral diplomacy – for neighbourhood problem solving could do much to serve regional progress.

Problems of nuclear waste are most pronounced in the Barents region, due to inadequate handling facilities for waste from the Russian Northern Fleet. An agreement has been concluded between Russia, Norway and the United States for the removal of existing waste. Other nuclear waste, e.g. from nuclear energy plants in the St. Petersburg area, continues to pose a challenge to all regional governments.

Concluding remarks: Questions on a grander scale

This chapter has sought to identify questions rather than answer them. On the most general level, some final ones are suggested here. Taking a grand view, perhaps the broadest issue of an organisational nature raised by the Northern Dimension initiative is that of fitting sub-regional arrangements into the EU framework. The two most prominent cases are the EU-Russia dialogue, which is well integrated, and the Nordic institutions, which are barely considered at all in EU policymaking. Generally, sub-regional security arrangements in the Baltic Sea region are as complicated as ever.[21]

This issue crops up in a slightly different shape in the interface between the EU and the OSCE, where so-called 'regional tables' have played a role in the work on the Balladur Plan and the resulting Stability Pact for aspiring EU members. Given the characteristics of the OSCE as an overall framework in European security cooperation, the potential of a sub-regional grouping within it to work on CSBMs and conflict resolution in the Baltic Sea region may usefully be discussed once more under the new circumstances after 1999.

As an indication that some new thinking is taking place on this score, the Swedish Defence Minister von Sydow launched a proposal in January 2000 to establish what he calls a "common security council for the Baltic Sea region" under the aegis of the EACP, the EU or the CBSS, with the Nordics, the Baltic states, Russia Poland and Germany as members, while adding that "... even other countries with a maritime presence such as Great Britain might be interested".[22] All the while, it is noticeable that the OSCE is not mentioned by the report – yet another sign that it is struggling to gather the political support it needs. This, in turn, further demonstrates the political sensitivity of sub-regionality in the North European region and the need to discuss it more deeply in the present context.

Less organisational and more generally political is the challenge of how to tackle the broad incompatibility between NATO's stabilising effects on the region and the provocational effects of its expansion. To a great extent this is a socio-psychological problem in Moscow, but Russian sensibilities are matched by Western concerns not to damage the relationship.

Finally, there is an underlying question which has so far been treated as a given in this chapter, namely "How 'Northern'" are Poland, Germany and Denmark in the perception of the Finnish government as initiators of the Northern Dimension? The definition of 'Northern' given initially as comprising the Baltic littoral members of the EU is admittedly the easy answer to this query. Behind it lurks, for example, the possible divergence of interests between contiguous neighbours of Russia and other Northern EU members (the 'frontier' aspect), possibly the nerve touched in the brief Nordic skirmishes set off by the Lipponen initiative in the winter season 1997-98. But – as one may well ask – is there also a North/South dimension here that goes beyond the frontier aspect, and places Denmark, Germany and Poland – along with Lithuania and Latvia – south of a border which has Estonia, Finland, Norway and Sweden on the Northern side? The potential for such dividing lines to gain political significance is a factor which may undermine that drawing together of all good northern forces which the Northern Dimension is intended to achieve. In other words, the tendency for splits is not merely found between the "old East" and the "new West" of Europe. It is also very much an intra-West European problem. Whether the EU is capable of resolving that in a constructive way remains to be seen.

Notes

[1] See EU documents: "Orientation for a Union Approach towards the Baltic Sea Region", Communication from the Commission to the Council, 25 October 1994; adopted by the Council as 'Council Conclusions on the European Union policy *vis-à-vis* the Baltic Sea Region' (DS 268 Rev. 1; May 1995). Also EU Commission, *Report on the Current State of and Perspectives for Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region*, Brussels, 29. Nov. 1995 (COM (95) 609 final); and "Initiative for the Baltic Sea Region", Communication from the Commission, Brussels, 10 April 1996. See also Thomas Christensen, "European Integration and Nordic Security: The Role of the European Union in the Baltic Sea Region", in *Visions of European Security – Focal Point Sweden and Northern Europe*, (Stockholm: Olof Palme International Center, 1996), pp. 278-95.

[2] Speech delivered by Paavo Lipponen in Rovaniemi in September 1997.

[3] See Jaakko Blomberg, *'Opening Address', Conference on the Northern Dimension of the CFSP*, Helsinki, 7-8 November, 1997 (delivered on November 7).

[4] Item 92, Presidency Conclusions, Cologne European Council, 2-4 June 1999.

[5] Members of the BEAC are Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden, represented by the county authorities of their border regions. The Council also has a broad circle of observers, including the EU and the governments of the United States and Japan.

[6] The EEA agreement, concluded in 1991 between EFTA and the European Community, today embraces Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, plus the European Union.

[7] See The Baltic Charter. A Charter of Partnership Among the United States of America and the Republic of Estonia, Republic of Latvia, and Republic of Lithuania. Washington, D.C., January 16, 1998. See also Presentation by Ron Asmus, the US State Department, November 6, 1997, in conference proceedings from the 2nd Annual Stockholm Conference on Baltic Sea Security and Cooperation, *Towards an Inclusive Security Structure in the Baltic Sea Region* ed. by Joseph P. Kruzich and Anna Fahraeus. (Stockholm: The Embassy of the United States of America, the Swedish Institute of International Affairs and the Stockholm Peace Research Institute, December 1997), pp. 41-45.

[8] Tanks, artillery, armoured personnel carriers, combat helicopters and combat aircraft.

[9] Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Sweden.

[10] See The Governments of Finland and Sweden, *Non-paper on Cooperative Security for the Baltic Sea Region*, dated Apr 17 1998, published May 17 1998, paras. 7 and 13.

[11] See the discussion in Olav F. Knudsen, "Cooperative Security In The Baltic Sea Region", Chaillot Papers No. 33. Paris: Institute for Security Studies, Western European Union, November 1998, pp. 49-50.

[12] *The Baltic Charter. A Charter of Partnership Among the United States of America and the Republic of Estonia, Republic of Latvia, and Republic of Lithuania.* Washington, D.C., January 16, 1998.

[13] Its mission has occasionally bordered on hard security issues as in the case of environmental safety relating to nuclear reactors in the former Soviet Union. Still, CBSS members have drawn "a line in the sand" to keep the CBSS out of hard security. See http://www.baltinfo.org/.

[14] Source: http://virtual.finland.fi/finfo/english/barents.html, March 6, 2000.

[15] Source: http://arctic-council.usgs.gov/ , March 6, 2000.

[16] According to international bodies of oversight including the UN, the Council of Europe and the OSCE. See also Krister Wahlbeck, *'The Situation of the Russians in Estonia and Latvia'*, Promemoria, (mimeo) Utrikesdepartementet, Stockholm 1997-02-07.

[17] The demonstrators were protesting against utility prices. Some Latvian newspapers criticised the police for using excessive force. Russian verbal reactions were strong; Moscow's Mayor Luzhkin talked about 'genocide'. See also the commentary by Nils Muiznieks, "A Season for Extremism", *The Baltic Times*, April 2 – 8, 1998, which puts the rising Russo-Latvian tensions in a wider context of escalating pressure on the non-citizen groups by Latvia's political right, especially the Fatherland and Freedom Party which headed the governing coalition at the time.

[18] See *International Herald Tribune* April 9, 1998. The effects may have hurt Russia itself as much as they did Latvia. According to Fearnley's and Petroleum Intelligence the volume of Russian oil exports flowing through the Baltic Sea in November 1997 was 18% of total Russian oil exports, and varied between 13% and 18% throughout 1997. Oil to western destinations from Russia are also exported by tankers from Black Sea ports (40% in

November 1997) and through the Druzhba pipeline (42%) to Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Germany.

[19] See Statement by the Press Office of the President of the Russian Federation, Feb. 11, 1997, Concerning Russia's Long-Term Policy Approved by the President Towards the Baltic Countries. Also, for the specific references to Finland and Sweden, see statement by Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander A. Avdeev at the Conference on Security in the Nordic Countries and Adjacent Areas organised by the Nordic Council, Helsinki, Aug. 26, 1997; and the speech by Prime Minister Chernomyrdin to a meeting of East-Central European Heads of State and Governments in Vilnius, Sept. 5, 1997.

[20] See Carl Bildt (1994) "The Baltic Litmus Test", *Foreign Affairs*, 73 (5): 72-85. Also Ronald D. Asmus and Robert C. Nurick (1996) 'NATO Enlargement and the Baltic States', Survival 38 (2): 121-142.

[21] See Olav F. Knudsen and Iver B. Neumann, Subregional Security Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Area: An Exploratory Study, *NUPI Report, no. 189* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, March 1995).

[22] *Dagens Nyheter*, January 25, 2000.

British pragmatism: Security and environment

Clive Archer

This chapter will examine the United Kingdom's perspective on the northern security dimension of the European Union. After a brief background introduction, it outlines British interests in the region. It then specifically examines the security dimension of British interests in the region. The final section examines British policy in relation to the Northern Dimension, especially its security aspect.

Background

Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen, in his speech at Rovaniemi in September 1997, remarked that the EU had obtained a Northern Dimension, not least with Finnish and Swedish membership, but needed a policy for that aspect. This dimension was mentioned in the communiqué of the Cardiff EU summit held under the British Presidency, though those in the British Foreign Office dealing with such matters found the idea somewhat vague. Its inclusion in the Presidency Conclusions of the Vienna European Council made it a continuing feature for EU concern, and it was entrenched at the Cologne and Helsinki European Councils. Furthermore a conference of EU and other foreign ministers from the area was held in November 1999.[1]

A number of policies – commercial, environmental, structural and regional, foreign and security, civic and humanitarian – are encapsulated in the initiative. It covers the areas to the north of the EU, defined either widely to include much of the Arctic and

sub-Arctic region and the Baltic Sea area, or more closely to include the Barents-Euro Region and the Baltic Sea region. The Interim Report on a Northern Dimension given to the Vienna European Council focused on the area between the northern part of the EU and North-West Russia and specifically mentioned the CBSS, BEAC and the Arctic Council (AC). The policy areas covered were those of energy, environment and nuclear safety, cross-border co-operation, trade, transport and communication, and health. The November 1999 Foreign Ministers' conference represented high-level contact between the EU, Poland, the three Baltic states, Norway, Iceland and the Russian Federation in order to develop the Northern Dimension concept.[2]

British involvement

First, the United Kingdom (UK) is geographically a "northern" state in the EU and one that connects the wider Arctic-Atlantic region to the core of the smaller 'Russian frontier' zone. However, the United Kingdom is not just a "northern" country and would not want to be seen as such.

That having being said, the UK does have particular interests in these regions, and ones that can be pursued through the EU. British firms have economic considerations, not least those in hydrocarbons and fisheries, in Northern Waters. Obviously, the development of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and agreement to various EU energy and gas directives has been of prime concern for these companies and for their interests in Norwegian, Russian and international waters in the north, as well as in the UK economic zone. On land, there are some British commercial involvements in North-West Russia and the Baltic states, though these are small compared with those of Germany and the Nordic countries.[3] The United Kingdom could also have

an interest in the commercial opening up of the Northern Sea Route (NSR) along Russia's Arctic coast, and the Scott Polar Research Institute at Cambridge University has been involved in some of the pre-studies being conducted by the Norwegians, Russians and Japanese concerning the feasibility of increased NSR use.[4]

The environment in the north is of concern to the UK, not least because the Arctic environmental conditions impact on the British Isles and, it must be admitted, the UK impacts on that fragile environment. In the past, acid rain from UK emissions was a source of friction between the UK and the Nordic states and the radioactivity from Windscale and Dounray is still a bone of contention. More recently, the major consideration has been the environmental threat posed by spent nuclear fuel, nuclear waste and decaying infrastructures in North-West Russia, and this has been of concern to the British as well as the Nordic states and the EU more generally.[5] Indeed, a joint British-Norwegian conference on this subject was held at Chatham House in early 1998, and this brought out the involvement of companies such as British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL) in attempts to clean up the Russian north.[6]

The reasons given for British involvement in environmental issues in North-West Russia have been summarised as follows:
– A serious accident could affect the food chain and thus the UK food supply;
– Showing solidarity with the Nordic states by the United Kingdom;
– Self-interest in EU budget terms – accidents cost money;
–Britain's nuclear industry becomes "contaminated" by association if there is a nuclear accident in Russia;
– The UK can engage Russians constructively on such issues.
– It supports the START process: Russian ability to deal with decommissioning is limited and their storage of spent fuel is vulnerable until safe interim storage is provided;

– UK public concern about health risks encourages any move to improve or avoid deterioration of the health situation;
– It is environmentally responsible to increase environmental awareness by others;
– Until environmental problems are dealt with, there is a limit to the development of the northern area in tourism and fisheries, for example;
– There are some limited opportunities for British companies (e.g. their high-quality nuclear industry).[7]

This list demonstrates the mixture of reasons for British engagement: the nuclear waste element has been important, and has been blended with commercial and strategic factors.

Perhaps the main interest in the region is still one of security (see section below). Given the UK's North Atlantic position and traditional involvement in the Nordic region, as well as wider UK concerns, it is not surprising that the UK has become involved in some of the security aspects of the Baltic states. The UK was instrumental – together with the Nordic states – in creating the Baltic Battalion (BALTBAT) which has been an activity by which the three Baltic states have become more involved in Partnership for Peace (PfP). Though this is not an EU activity, it does have consequences should the idea of an EU defence policy be developed, with non-Article Five activities forming a pillar (or sub-pillar) of a revised Amsterdam Treaty. British expertise in these areas has been welcomed, as has a British presence.

The security aspect and the United Kingdom[8]

In the security policy field, the United Kingdom continued its close wartime links with Denmark and Norway into the post-war period, providing both with material and training for their

armed forces. Defence links were formalised by the three countries' membership of NATO, though in the late 1940s and 1950s UK planners accepted that both countries could not be defended in the event of a full-scale attack across northern Europe by the Soviet Union.[9] Despite its non-aligned position, Sweden was of security interest to the UK as well as to the United States, as it was seen as providing a defence bulwark in the north against Soviet forces. Secret agreements were made with the Swedes about the possible use of facilities in wartime and it is now clear that the Swedish armed forces – especially the air force – had much closer links with the Norwegians than might be expected of a non-allied country.[10]

During the 1950s the main British security concern in the North European region was maritime and it consisted of the Royal Navy shadowing the growing Soviet navy in the waters off North Norway.[11] By the end of the 1960s the Americans had taken over this task, with the UK in a subsidiary role and having a growing interest in the land and air defence of Norway and Denmark.[12] British forces trained regularly in Northern Europe and were earmarked for deployment to the north.[13]

On the political-security side, Britain saw Denmark and Norway as loyal allies throughout the 1950s and 1960s. However, by the end of the 1970s and through much of the 1980s, Denmark was regarded with some annoyance on two grounds. First, it was felt that the Danes were not spending enough on defence and were becoming 'free riders' in NATO. Secondly, the Danish footnotes to NATO communiqués when their parliamentarians disagreed with a particular policy seemed unnecessary to the British government.[14] Norway's record of defence expenditure and general support for NATO policy was appreciated, though when their defence minister did insist on one NATO footnote, the British and Americans quickly let their displeasure be known.[15]

The general British policy on Swedish and Finnish neutrality

during the Cold War was one of acceptance. By the 1970s and 1980s there was a feeling in London that governments in Stockholm and Helsinki were being unduly critical of the West and obliging to Moscow, a criticism that became stronger with the election of Mrs Thatcher. In security matters, the Swedes and the Finns were definitely 'not one of us', to use that lady's famous phrase. However, there is some evidence that the British military appreciated that the Finns were building up their defences quite considerably by the end of the 1980s.[16]

Since the end of the Cold War, official British attitudes to the Nordic part of northern Europe have changed somewhat in the security field. Relations with Norway have remained close, with British troops exercising in North Norway,[17] though the issue of the environmental effects of the decaying Russian military presence in the north is one of increasing common interest, as mentioned. Changes in NATO's command structure further weakened the close ties that existed between Norway and the United Kingdom when the latter held the command of the former AFNORTH headquarters at Kolsås.[18] There is now more in common with Sweden and Finland after those two countries became active in PfP, in SFOR and IFOR (both in former Yugoslavia) and have indicated their intention of contributing to the so-called Petersberg Tasks (such as peacekeeping) through the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. Also, links with Denmark have been reaffirmed through both countries' activities in training the Baltic states' forces. However, there is no longer – at least for the time being – the feeling that the Nordic states – especially Norway – are important buttresses between the British Isles and Russia. The security relationship may be said to have weakened but also broadened, especially with a new interest in the Baltic states and in "soft security" issues. These issues deal with the wide range of security questions that do not involve the use of combat troops, and can include economic and environmental security, civic security and humanitarian assistance.

The 1998 British initiative on defence (which became the UK-French defence initiative) has some consequences for Northern Europe. The aim was "to see a strong common foreign and security policy for the European Union" and to see a "more effective European military capability" to take on the Petersberg Tasks.[19] The three strands to be addressed were those of the common political will in this area, having an effective defence capability, and having the effective means to turn decision into action. Though the United Kingdom government has 'no hidden blueprint to redesign Europe's institutional architecture',[20] it has certain preferences and these have included both the strengthening of the transatlantic element in any European security arrangement and a recognition of the 'positions of the associate members of the WEU' such as Norway and Iceland.[21] It seemed that the Blair government was intent on making progress in the field of European defence and security and wished to use the institutions of the EU to a much greater extent than its Conservative predecessor in order to do this. Thus the British Prime Minister was able to sign a joint declaration on the matter with his French counterpart.[22] However, there are a number of general consequences of such a development of the European security and defence identity: for Article V defence (collective defence), for EU-WEU institutions and for the relations between the EU, the WEU and NATO. These have been noted in European Council discussions on the emerging defence identity (for example at the Cologne European Council) but how to address these consequences has still to be agreed by the EU governments. For example, the 'necessary decisions' for the EU to fulfil its new responsibilities in the Petersberg Tasks are to be taken by the end of 2000.[23]

There are more specific consequences for the northern part of the EU, partly because Denmark, Finland, and Sweden are not full members of the WEU and Finland and Sweden have an alliance-free defence policy. It may be that these latter two states

will feel able to contribute to the Petersberg Tasks decided through the EU, but would not wish to see "hard security" questions dealt with there. Denmark has its own political problems in seeing defence issues covered by the EU.[24] The United Kingdom has traditionally been happy to use these complications (and those of the NATO-Europe non-EU states) as reasons not to press for greater EU competence in defence and security. This attitude seems to have changed and it may be up to the United Kingdom, as one of the initiators of the new process, to find solutions that will be acceptable to the Nordic states and, at the same time, will not antagonise the Russians. In this case, "flexibility" and "pragmatism" will be key words for UK negotiators in the development of the EU's security and defence competence.

British policy

The UK attitude to the Northern Dimension has to be interpreted through the overall approach of the Blair government to the EU. After an uncertain beginning, it seems that the major concern has been to improve bilateral relations within the EU and to participate in initiatives where Britain had interests and something to give, and not to be excluded. The main aim has been to place the EU at the centre of British policy and to make the UK a major player within the EU. On the whole, this has meant a definite attempt to improve relations with the key EU members of France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands. Relations with the northern EU members have been regarded as good, especially because of the links with all three governments through the European Socialists. But the main point must be stressed here – Britain does not want to be defined as just a "Northern" state. Therefore Britain's contribution to the development of the

Northern Dimension has been one of participation where warranted. It has not expected to be a lead player. However, the importance of EU relations with Russia has been stressed and the Northern Dimension has to be seen in that context. In particular, the stress on building up civil society in the region and supporting aspects of "soft security" has fitted in well with Mr Blair's emphasis on "the international community."[25] The stress on the environmental aspect speaks both to concerns of principle and to commercial interests, especially as Britain has expertise in this area, not least in the nuclear waste field.

More generally, the feeling about Russia has been one of concern and dismay. The vast natural resources of the Russian Federation offer a number of opportunities for a trading country such as the United Kingdom, but currently there are too many difficulties for most British firms to participate in the exploitation of these Russian raw materials. On the whole, the United Kingdom has been concerned about the security, political, economic and social situation in Russia. On the security side, the main concerns have been those of control of the nuclear arsenal, the leakage of weapons into the black market, the state of Russian armed forces, the safety of nuclear installations and submarines. In the longer term, there is increasing suspicion about the rebuilding of particular aspects of the armed forces that may offer a direct threat to parts of Europe (such as the Baltic states or the north more generally). The main political concerns will continue to be those of a power vacuum leading to the implosion of the Federation, and/or the coming to power of an ultra-nationalist and militarist politician. The concern on the economic and social side is that of complete economic collapse followed by greater social upheaval. Many of these themes are expressed in a veiled way in the European Commission's paper on the Northern Dimension prepared for the Vienna Summit.[26]

The general official British feeling has been that the EU should give medium priority to the northern region. For itself,

"the UK expresses a very modest interest in the Baltic Sea".[27] The UK attitude to the Baltic states is still that they should be encouraged in the pre-accession strategy to prepare them for full EU membership but that they should have no special favours in any membership evaluation. The UK is an observer in the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, and from 1999 in the Council of Baltic Sea States. The Foreign Office took the initiative in 1998 to gather together in one umbrella forum those involved in research and activities in the Arctic and there have been a number of ministerial visits to the area.

The main points of a British response to the Northern Dimension initiative were clear in time for the Helsinki foreign ministers' meeting in November 1999. Indeed, they were in the making by the end of 1998 and early 1999. Excluding the security aspect, covered above, the United Kingdom's main concerns about the initiative have been both with its nature and contents.

On the nature of the initiative, the UK has been insistent that the Northern Dimension should be fully consistent with the EU Common Strategy on Russia adopted at the 1999 Cologne European Council. The British have also been clear that there should be realistic objectives and no new resources. On the contents, the United Kingdom has particularly welcomed the following policies being covered in the Northern Dimension: the nuclear clean-up in North-West Russia; securing borders, fighting organised crime; helping Russia to solve its problems, especially those of energy supplies; and a better co-ordination of EU programmes in the region.

Actions taken by the United Kingdom

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office ran a seminar in London in December 1998 on nuclear waste in Russia, which was attended by the Russian Deputy Atomic Energy Minister and

the Governor of Murmansk and was addressed by the Foreign Office Minister of State. British interest in the question was flagged, with reference being made to the British nuclear waste management industry as, 'a recognised world leader', and notice was given of a Foreign Office project to develop 'interim storage facilities for spent nuclear fuel which cannot be processed' in the Kola region.[28] In March 1999, the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, visited Murmansk where he stated: "I come here as Foreign Secretary because the environmental hazard of nuclear waste is an international issue and there could be no better place to address that problem than in Murmansk. This region contains one of the largest concentrations of nuclear waste in the world."[29]

It must have been a mixed blessing for the people of Murmansk to hear the reason for the minister's visit. However, the tour was sweetened by Mr Cook announcing a three-million pound aid package to help the Russians improve their nuclear waste management and to provide casks for nuclear fuel rods. Norwegian and EU initiatives on the environmental issue were also specifically mentioned.[30] It should be noted that the issues of spent nuclear fuel and nuclear waste in North-West Russia were specifically mentioned in the context of the Northern Dimension in Joint Statement from the EU-Russian summit in Moscow in February 1999.[31] Other British official involvement has included sponsorship of environmental projects in the three Baltic states, assistance with the development of customs organisations in those three states, and programmes for the three states under the British Know How Fund. Areas for future British involvement in the Council for Baltic Sea Co-operation are The Task force on Organised Crime, environmental activities under the Baltic 21 programme, the Baltic University programme and tourism.[32]

Conclusions

In many policy areas, the Nordic EU members are generally regarded as being Britain's 'allies' within the Union as they see its nature in terms similar to those familiar in London. However, this should not be overstated as, especially in the past, the Nordic states have been opposed to Britain on policy matters in, for example, environmental and social questions, though, with a change of government in London, those differences have somewhat disappeared. Also the Nordic states have not always acted as a bloc. Indeed, one comment from London is about the way the Nordic states seem to compete with each other in various initiatives in their area. Also it is noticeable that while Denmark and Sweden opted out of the third stage of EMU in 1999, Finland joined. Another interesting development would be the accession of Norway to the EU, bringing in a country with resources and strong interests in the region. In security terms Norway has always been close to the United Kingdom, though in the post-Cold War period it has been busy developing its links with the other Nordic states.

Overall, it is hard to see a definite and strong voting bloc including the Nordic states and the United Kingdom, but these countries are prepared to work together very closely when they do have common interests. The Baltic states are regarded as suitable future EU members, though there are no illusions in London about the progress that these states need to make before they can become members.

In summary, British interests in and policy on the Northern Dimension reflect a continued security concern, though one with a changing nature, and an increased environmental involvement. There are also modest commercial interests in the region, some connected with environmental matters. The UK government sees the Northern Dimension as part of the wider EU relationship with Russia, and is also anxious to give support to Nordic initiatives and practical help to the three Baltic states.

Notes

[1] Para 109 of Presidency Conclusions, Vienna European Council 11 & 12 December 1998: http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec98.htm#annex4; para 92 of Presidency Conclusions, Cologne European Council, 3 & 4 June 1999: http://europa.eu.int/newsroom/main.cfm?LANG=1; para 62 of Presidency Conclusions Helsinki European Council,10 and 12 December 1999: http://presidency.finland.fi/netcomm/News/ShowArticle.asp?intNWSAID=2370&int.../199; Foreign Ministers' Conference on the Northern Dimension 11th and 12th November 1999, Conclusions of the Chair, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Helsinki, HELD421-73.

[2] Foreign Ministers' Conference on the Northern Dimension 11th and 12th November 1999, Conclusions of the Chair, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Helsinki, HELD421-73. See also the welcoming speech given by the Finnish Prime Minister, Paavo Lipponen, at the Conference on the Northern Dimension, at http://presidency.finland.fi/netcomm/news/showarticle.asp?intNWSAID=1889&intIGID=16.11.1999

[3] See *NEBI Yearbook 1998: North European and Baltic Sea Integration* ed. by Lars Hedegaard & Bjarne Lindström (Berlin: Springer, 1998) pp. 563-618. While the UK is an important trade partner for the Nordic states, it is overshadowed by Germany in the trade of Poland, the Baltic states and N.W. Russia.

[4] See Lawson Brigham, 'The Russians Open the Arctic for Business', *US Naval Institute Proceedings* Vol. 119/1 (January 1993) pp.92-3. The present author was an assessor for the International Northern Sea Route Programme Stage 1 and an assessment meeting was hosted by the Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, April 1996.

[5] See para 110 of the Vienna Presidency Conclusions, as note 1. See also Törbjörn Norendal, 'North-West Russia – Radioactive Waste Situation', paper given to Norwegian Atlantic Committee conference held at Leangkollen, 1-3 Feb, 1999, and NATO, NATO/CCMS Pilot Study: Cross-Border Environmental Problems Emanating from Defence-Related Installations and Activities, Phase II: 1995-1998. *Summary Final Report*, (Brussels: NATO), Report no.223.

[6] See, for example, *World Winning Solutions for the Nuclear Industry*

(Risley: British Nuclear Fuels plc) especially pp. 9-13.

[7] This list is adapted from the minutes of the University Association for Contemporary European Studies (UACES) Workshop held on 9 April 1999 at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, p.1.

[8] The information in the first part of this section is a revised version of Clive Archer 'British Policies Towards Scandinavia' in *Changing Britain, Changing Europe* ed. by Håken R. Nilson (Oslo: Europa-programmet, Europa I dag nr.5, 1998) pp. 78-80.

[9] See Rolf Tamnes, *The United States and the Cold War in the High North* (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1991) pp. 49-61.

[10] See *Om kriget kommit. Förberedelser för mottagande av militärt bistånd 1949-1969.* Betänkande av Neutralitetespolitikkommissionen (Stockholm: Statens offentliga utredningar, 1994:11) especially pp. 159-82.

[11] Eric Grove, *Vanguard to Trident. British Naval Policy since World War Two,* (Annapolis MD: Naval institute Press, 1987) especially Chs. 9 & 10; and Clive Archer, *Uncertain Trust: The British-Norwegian Defence Relationship* (Oslo: Institutt for Forsvarsstudier, 1989) Forsvarsstudier no. 2.

[12] Geoffrey Till, *"Storbritannien og de nordligste områder'" in Flådestrategier og nordisk sikkerhedspolitik.* Bind 2 (Copenhagen: SNU, 1986) pp. 121-34.

[13] See Clive Archer, *Uncertain Trust: The British-Norwegian Defence Relationship* (Oslo: Institutt for Forsvarsstudier, 1989) Forsvarsstudier no. 2, and Rolf Tamnes, *The United States and the Cold War in the High North* (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1991) pp. 251-2.

[14] See Clive Archer, *Security Options for Denmark,* (Oslo: National Defence College, 1991) IFS Info, no. 2.

[15] See Rolf Tamnes, *The United States and the Cold War in the High North* (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1991) pp. 292-4.

[16] Tomas Ries, *Cold Will. The Defence of Finland* (London: Brassey's, 1988) perhaps contained the first revisionist view of Finland's armed forces. The book was publicly launched at a reception in the Finnish Ambassador's residence in London. A later appreciation can be seen in a work by a former British army officer, H. M. Tillotsen, *Finland at peace and war,* (Wilby: Michael Russell, 1996) especially Part V.

[17] A speech by Douglas Henderson, the UK Minister for the Armed Forces in Oslo, 1999, reminded the mainly Norwegian audience that some 8,000 British personnel had trained in Norway in 1998.

Speech by Minister (Armed Forces) to the Norwegian Atlantic Committee, 1 February 1999, mimeo, p. 1.

[18] See Eivind Berdal, "AFNORTH in NATO's Military Command Structure" in *Headquarters Allied Forces Northern Europe 1951-1994*, ed. by A. Sandvik (Oslo: AFNORTH, 1994) pp. 76-83; *Nordisk sikkerhet, Militærbalansen 1999-2000* ed. by Chris Prebensen (Oslo: DNAK, 2000) pp. 55-57; and Bertel Heurlin, "Military Command Structures in the Baltic Sea" in *NEBI Yearbook 1998: North European and Baltic Sea Integration*, ed. by Lars Hedegaard & Bjarne Lindström (Berlin: Springer, 1998) pp. 405-22.

[19] See speech by Douglas Henderson, as note 17, p. 6.

[20] See speech by Douglas Henderson, as note 17, p. 17.

[21] See speech by Douglas Henderson, as note 17, p. 9. See also Prebensen, as note 18, p. 58.

[22] Franco-British summit – Joint Declaration on European Defence. 4.12.1998, Saint-Malo, mimeo.

[23] See Richard Whitman, *Amsterdam's Unfinished Business? The Blair Government's initiative and the future of the Western European Union*, Occasional Paper 7 (Paris: WEU Institute for Security Studies, 1999). Also see Annex III "On Strengthening the Common Defence Policy on Security and Defence", Cologne European Council, June 1999, at http://europa.eu.int/newsroom/main.cfm?LANG=1

[24] Nikolaj Petersen, 'Denmark and the European Union 1985-1996: A two-level analysis', *Co-operation and Conflict*, 31 (2), (1996), pp. 184-210.

[25] 'Doctrine of the international community': Speech by the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, to the Economic Club of Chicago, Hilton Hotel, Chicago, USA, Thursday 22 April 1999,

[26] *A Northern Dimension for the Policies of the Union*, Paper provided by DG 1A. See especially paras. 13, 14, 16-18, 24.

[27] Bertel Heurlin, as note 18, p. 417.

[28] 'Derek Fatchett opens seminar on nuclear waste in Russia', *Foreign & Commonwealth Office News*, 3 December 1998: http://www.fco.gov.uk/news/newstext.asp?1778 See also Foreign & Commonwealth Office, *'The Nuclear Environment in North-West Russia'*, Background Brief, London, December 1998.

[29] "Cook announces 3 million pound aid package for Russian nuclear management", *Foreign & Commonwealth Office News*, 3 March, 1999

[30] Ibid., p. 2.

[31] Joint Statement EU-Russia Summit – Moscow, 18 February 1999, http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg1a/daily/02_99/pres_99_43.htm. Nuclear safety was tagged as 'an essential issue' in the Common Strategy on Russia adopted at the Cologne European Council, See Annex II 'Common Strategy of the European Union on Russia at http://europa.eu.int/nesroom/main.cfm?LANG=1

[32] Howard Pearce, "A View from London", *Baltinfo News*, no. 20, (1999), pp. 6-7: http://www.baltinfo.org/newsletters/baltinfo20-99.htm

Spanish worries about a North South divide*

Esther Barbé

Introduction

From the Spanish perspective, the Northern Security Dimension of the European Union is a minor matter on the Spanish national agenda. In fact, there is no debate at all among the Spanish foreign ministry officials or in the public at large regarding Northern Europe as a security region. Consequently, this chapter argues that, at present, Spain does not have a policy regarding the Northern Dimension. Nonetheless, one can perceive that some of the changes in post-Cold War Northern Europe also had an effect on Spain in the first half of the nineties. In fact, some of those changes even evoked strong reactions from the Spanish government, as in the case of, for example, the fourth enlargement of the EU, as well as the large number of EU aid programmes destined for the Eastern European countries, including Russia. In both cases the Spanish response reflected a potentially emerging North-South divergence. In other words, Spain feared an enlarged Union dominated by Northern countries and their agendas, where the Southern priorities such as Mediterranean agriculture, cohesion policy, and aid programmes for non-member Mediterranean countries, would be neglected.

This chapter deals with the Spanish approach towards Europe's North and the Northern agenda composed mainly of soft security issues. This approach is based on some fundamental characteristics of Spain that make it different from

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its EU Northern partners. Spain is a "Southern" country, in geopolitical as well as economic (Mediterranean agriculture) terms; a "large" country, in demographic terms (40 million inhabitants); a "poor" country, in comparison to the EU average (Spanish GDP per capita amounted in 1998 to 79 per cent of the average of the Fifteen); moreover, Spain did not share the experience of the traumatic World Wars of 20th century Europe, events which have so profoundly shaped the contemporary character and policy making in Northern Europe.

Franco's dictatorship vs. Northern social democracy

Spain did not participate in the transition processes experienced by Europe after the Second World War. The dictatorship of General Francisco Franco distanced Spain, in political terms, from the social democracies in Northern Europe. However, this did not hinder important techno-economic interaction from developing between Spain and Europe's North (tourism, investment). In political terms, the northern governments were the harshest critics of Franco's regime. Their policy towards Spain, during the Franco years, would correspond to the profile of the "moralist country", an epithet that Christopher Hill applied to the Netherlands, Ireland and Denmark in the framework of European Political Co-operation (EPC).[1] An example of these moralist policies was the crisis provoked in the EPC by the death sentence of various militants of ETA (Basc Country and Freedom) and FRAP (Patriotic and Antifascist Revolutionary Front) in September 1975. The execution by firing squad of five militants gave rise to a host of responses within the Community. The issue was to prove so controversial that the Nine were not able to find a common position in the framework of the EPC. Denmark and the Netherlands held the most severe positions, which translated into the withdrawal of their

respective ambassador to Spain, while Ireland and France did not remove theirs.[2] However, in the Nordic countries, a group that held a concerted policy, the withdrawal of the respective ambassador was followed by a strong social reaction. One must highlight the severe criticism of the Franco regime by the late Prime Minister of Sweden, Olof Palme, and the reaction of the Nordic transport unions, which boycotted the Spanish flight connections to Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

Once the process of political transition towards democracy was initiated in Spain, the relation between Spain and Northern Europe was strengthened through the bonds between the European socialist parties. In this context, it is worth noting the symbolism of the presence of Willy Brandt and Olof Palme at the 27th Congress of the Spanish Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, PSOE) in December 1976.[3] Both political leaders gave their full support to PSOE and to the Spanish Prime Minister, Felipe González. Beyond mere political gestures, the German social democrats played a decisive role in the transition year by acting as a mediator between Spain's diverse political forces[4], although the Germans assisted, perhaps above all, by financing and technically training the PSOE. In a way, one could speak of a certain German influence on the Spanish transition.

"Diffuse reciprocity" between Germany and Spain

Once the Spanish democracy was consolidated, Spain focused its attention on Germany, having a much lesser interest in Northern Europe's smaller countries. When Spain joined the European Community, Madrid looked to establish a relevant relationship with Germany. In fact, Germany had been the main supporter of the Spanish accession to the Community, ignoring the French hesitation. Once Spain entered the EC, Germany became its vital partner, both in economic (trade, investment)

and in political terms. More importantly, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Felipe González initiated a bilateral privileged relationship, copying the Franco-German pattern with biannual meetings of prime ministers. Coincidence on European affairs was a centripetal force in the German-Spanish relationship. In fact, both governments were in favour of deepening the European construction in political terms (Common Foreign and Security Policy, CFSP). Kohl's administration was the most important financial supporter of the Spanish request for solidarity (cohesion policy, structural funds), whereas González was a fervent supporter of Kohl's policies in acute moments. Thus, González was ardently in favour of German reunification, being the only leader in Europe supporting the reunification project from the very first moment. It should be emphasised that in Spain, unlike other European countries, the reunification issue was not at all problematic. This can be explained by the historical particularities of Spain, the Spanish people do not have a negative perception of Germany, or of the "German power". On the contrary, Germany has, during the nineties in yearly polls, been the most esteemed country for the Spanish elite as well as for the general public.[5]

The current trends in German-Spanish relations seem to indicate the end of the "diffuse reciprocity"[6] game played by Germany and Spain for many years (financial resources for Spain in exchange for political influence for Germany). The reorientation of Germany on EU budget issues has produced a change in Spanish attitudes towards its former close partner and the evolution of Spanish-German relations in the future is an open issue. It could lead towards a North-South rift in European politics. As a result, Spain would become even more disinterested in the notion of "Northern problems", and instead focus on domestic/Southern problems. The confrontation between Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar and German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder during the European Council of

Berlin (March 1999) could be seen as the most important signal in that direction.[7]

Balancing Baltic and Mediterranean and NATO enlargement

The first step taken by Spain in the "Southern" direction was its reaction when faced with the changes in the external dimension of the EC at the end of the Cold War. At that time, Spain already saw the new German focus on the Eastern/Northern dimensions of Europe as a challenge. Spain opposed the subregionalisation of European politics, which was perceived as emerging in the Baltic Sea region. Simultaneously, Spain looked for a clear commitment by the EC to confront Southern/Mediterranean problems, other than the Northern/Eastern problems. Confronted with an aid proposal for the Soviet Union presented during the European Council of Rome, in December 1990, the Spanish Prime Minister asked for the balancing of any aid for Eastern Europe with aid for the Mediterranean.

One might thus infer that the Spanish policy has, during the first half of the nineties, focused on the attempt to balance the new Eastern/Baltic Sea agenda of the EU with a Southern/ Mediterranean one.[8] The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership which was created at the Barcelona Conference (November 95) was the clear result of this policy. However, this Mediterranean versus Baltic Sea approach cannot be considered a permanent trend in Spanish policy. In the latter half of the 1990s the Spanish interest in the Mediterranean region appears to have waned. This is due to the fact that Spanish external interests are increasingly being dictated by economic globalisation factors, rather than by security factors (Mediterranean proximity). For example, in 1998, 67% of Spanish foreign direct investment went to Latin America, making Spain the principal investor of the

Fifteen in that region.

Enlargement of NATO and the EU, in terms of Poland and the Baltic states, are some of the main issues on the Northern agenda. Although the mainstream opinion pictures Spain as a country opposed to inclusion of the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) in those organisations, the fact is that the Spanish (public opinion, foreign policy elite) are in favour of both organisational enlargements.

In the case of NATO expansion, Spain was not really active in the enlargement debate, even if the country was supposed to be lobbying together with France in favour of Romania. Romania was seen as essential for France and Spain to strengthen the Southern Flank of NATO. However, Spain showed itself significantly more active in other areas of NATO reform. Spain produced a particular agenda focused on two objectives: the installation of a NATO command in Spain and the disappearance of the existing NATO command in Gibraltar.[9] The enlargement issue was not a priority on the Spanish negotiation agenda, even if the Spanish official position did favour an all-inclusive enlargement. In fact, during the summit of the AC celebrated in Madrid in July 1997, Spain supported the American position which favoured a limited enlargement (Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic). France criticised the Spanish stance, arguing that Spain had not kept its commitment to support the accession of Romania. Spain supported the American policy in order to attain its main negotiation demands, i.e. the instalment of a NATO command in Spain, and the disappearance of the Gibraltar command.

EU enlargement: An all-inclusive approach

In the case of EU enlargement, the Spanish policy needs a longer explanation. Spain has an all-inclusive approach

concerning EU enlargement, just as in the NATO enlargement process. A priori, none of the Eastern countries seem privileged by Spanish policy. The level of economic relations between Spain and the CEECs and Russia is very low (in 1998, 0.1% of Spanish investment went to the area; 2.21% of Spanish imports came from the area and 2.65% of Spanish exports went to the area). Furthermore, the trade between Spain and the Baltic states in 1998 was negligible: Spain imported from Lithuania (0.05%), Latvia (0.01%) and Estonia (0.01%) 0.07% of its total imports, and exported to Lithuania (0.04%), Latvia (0.02%) and Estonia (0.02%) 0.08% of its total exports.

The low level of relations between Spain and the Baltic states in the economic field is also reflected in the political arena. Spain has not established any embassy in any of the three Baltic countries. Thus, the Spanish ambassador to Finland officially assumes the charge of Spanish-Estonian diplomatic relations as well, the one in Sweden the Spanish-Latvian, and the one in Denmark the Spanish-Lithuanian. In this manner, the Spanish division of diplomatic tasks seems to echo the Nordic division of labour in assisting the economic and political transition of the Baltic states. For the Baltic countries' part, only Lithuania has established an embassy in Spain. In terms of official visits, it is worth noting that none of the Baltic states have received an official visit, neither by the Spanish Head of State nor at the Spanish governmental level. However, there have been two official visits from Lithuania to Spain, one by the Lithuanian Head of State and the other by the Head of the Government, and one official visit by the Latvian Prime Minister. One may infer a certain differentiation in the Spanish political relations with respect to Lithuania, compared to the other two Baltic states. This could probably be explained by certain cultural factors, i.e. the fact that Lithuania, just like Spain, is a Catholic country.

With regard to co-operation and development policy, Spain was, prior to 1998, the only larger Western European country

which did not have a policy of foreign aid for the CEECs. In 1998, the first administrative unit in Spain charged with developing a plan of co-operation towards these countries was established, with a modest funding of 12 million ECU.[10] The first programme of the said plan does not include the Baltic states. However, the plan calls for the opening of Spanish technical support and co-operation centres in Bosnia, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Russia and Ukraine.

In terms of public opinion, Spaniards are quite amenable to future EU enlargement (51% of support) when compared with the EU average (42% of support, Eurobarometer 1999).[11] In principle, Spanish public opinion seems to be more in favour of certain CEECs (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland). The support for EU enlargement has increased in Spain, just as in the EU in general. Between 1997 and 1998, once the European Council of Luxembourg had already selected the six countries to start formal accession negotiations, Spain was the EU member whose support for enlargement in the case of those six countries increased the most. The increase in Spanish support for Estonia's accession – 11% between 1997 and 1998 – was the most spectacular case in the whole Union. The strong public support for Estonia is quite inexplicable. However, it is necessary to point out that Spanish public opinion is one of the most underinformed in the EU. In 1998, 33% of Spaniards did not have an opinion concerning the enlargement, a percentage only surpassed by the Irish. Moreover, Spanish public opinion is highly variable, and will probably change its support for the EU enlargement, positively or negatively, depending on how the accession negotiations develop. The general public in Spain are likely to re-evaluate their positive stand on the enlargement process should the Spanish government emphasise the idea that the Eastern enlargement could spell the diminution of the resources received by Spain through the EU cohesion policies, and thus be detrimental to Spanish interests.

As mentioned earlier, Spain has been in favour of adopting an all-inclusive approach with regard to the Eastern enlargement. In the European Council of Madrid (December 1995), González, in the name of the Spanish Presidency, proposed the idea of starting negotiations with all the CEECs, following the Cyprus calendar (six months after the end of the intergovernmental conference). In fact, Spain was not interested in choosing the best partners for economic or security reasons, like Germany, but rather in maintaining its position in the Union in terms of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and cohesion policies. This concern has been present in all the documents produced by the different Spanish administrations under both González and Aznar. In fact, the Spanish position with regard to the Eastern enlargement was established in a Dictamen (Report to Congress) adopted by the Parliament in December 1995. This Dictamen was based on three main points: 1) The EU budget should be increased in order to confront the enlargement (from 1.27% to 2% of GDP); 2) the enlargement should be based on long transitory periods (between 20 and 30 years) before the new members participate in all the EU policies; and 3) the Union should create new instruments of cohesion for the new members, without affecting the existing ones (the *acquis communautaire*).[12] The defence of the acquis, seen as the defence of the present cohesion countries, is the main argument adopted by the Spanish Prime Minister[13] or by the Foreign Affairs Minister[14] any time the enlargement question is raised.

"Nordic bloc" versus Spanish interests

Regarding the importance of the Northern region for Spain in the EU context, this chapter argues that it changes depending on temporary circumstances. For instance, during the negotiations for the fourth enlargement, in 1994, the Northern region became

vital for Spain. Currently, conversely, it is reduced to a minor issue on the Spanish agenda. In fact, the Northern Dimension of the EU is considered a minor issue in Spain, except when Spanish interests are directly involved. That was the case during the EFTA Four enlargement negotiations. At that moment, there was an atmosphere of a North-South clash, albeit one which later disappeared, based on the reluctance of Spain regarding the accession of the EFTA Four. In fact, Spain was not hesitant regarding the accession itself. However, for the Spanish foreign policy elite, the Northern enlargement stirred past feelings and hinted at future problems.

The Northern enlargement evoked among the Spanish elite the feeling of being a "second class" country in Europe. Due to the celerity of the negotiations with the EFTA Four, Spanish diplomats recalled how Spain was treated during the accession negotiations. Indeed, the negotiations with Spain lasted for more than six years and some conditions were considered very hard by the Spanish negotiators, like the transitory period to become fully integrated in the CFP. Thus, throughout the negotiation period, Spain complained about what it perceived as communitarian concessions facilitating the EFTA countries' entry into the Union. However, the fact remains that the Spanish government took advantage of the EU negotiations with Norway to accelerate the full integration of Spain and Portugal in the CFP, initially foreseen for the year 2003. Above all, the Spanish diplomats argued that Spain and Portugal should be full members no later than the EFTA Four. As a matter of fact, the fishing issue was considered a vital interest by the Spanish EU elite, who were ready to veto the Norwegian accession agreement if Spanish requests had not been accepted.

The Spanish perception of having been mistreated, in comparison with the EFTA countries entering the EU in 1995, was also present in the CFSP/defence dimension. In this sense, the Spanish government was reluctant about the idea of having

a "neutral corridor" in the EU. Before the accession negotiations, some Spanish documents demanded full integration of the new members into the WEU at the same time as the EU. Indeed, some voices in Spain recalled that Spain was "forced" to join NATO as a first step towards integration into the Community. The fact is that the Spanish government was opposed to variable geometry in matters of foreign policy, security and defence. However, during the enlargement negotiation that issue was not seriously raised by the Spanish EU elite. Naturally, the Spanish position concerning variable geometry in matters of the CFSP and defence has changed in the new context (Fifteen, Amsterdam Treaty). Spain had already accepted an opting out for defence in the Danish case, after the first referendum. In that case, the Spanish acceptance was part of a deal package (Edinburgh, December 1992). Meanwhile, Spain accepted the Danish opting out and the beginning of the enlargement negotiations with the EFTA Four, and the EC decided the amount for the Cohesion Fund.

Focusing on foreign policy issues, a case in point of current divergence between Spain and the Nordic countries is the foreign aid policy. Whereas Spain is defending the Europeanisation of this policy, the Nordic countries insist on keeping multilateral (UN) and bilateral options. Thus, Spain is spending 24.5% of its aid through the EU, whereas Sweden is spending 5.8%, Finland 10.8%, and Denmark 6.5%.[15] The role in future of the office of humanitarian aid (ECHO), a fief of Spanish Eurocrats, could be an issue capable of causing troubles between Spain and the Nordic countries.

Spain versus Russia: The extremes of Europe

Russia is one of the main concerns of the Northern agenda. Nevertheless, as far as Russia and related soft security problems

are concerned, Spain has no policy. As we have seen, Spain maintains a low profile in Eastern Europe (Russia included), except for the role played in the case of military/humanitarian operations (Bosnia, Albania). Economic figures (trade, investment, foreign aid) illustrate this lack of interest in the Russian issue. The concern among the Spanish public with regard to Russia is directly linked to specific crises. For instance, during the first Chechnya War, Spanish opinion appeared to be more interested in Russian affairs. In any case, neither Russia nor the Soviet Union have been considered by Spanish people as a national security threat. Once more, the historical experience of Spain, together with geography, explains why Russia is not an important issue on the Spanish national agenda, neither as a threat nor as a partner (Spain established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union after Franco's death, in 1977). When Spaniards were asked in 1997 if any country was seriously threatening Spain, only 10% (general public opinion) or 11% (elite) believed so. The most important perceived threat to Spanish security is Morocco, especially for the Spanish elite. Only 1.6% of the general public mentioned Russia as a threat to Spain. More importantly, the Spanish elite seems to be amenable to reducing the level of foreign aid that Eastern Europe (Russia especially) is receiving.[16]

Conclusions

Russia is not perceived as an important country in Spanish national interests. On this the successive Spanish administrations of González and Aznar seemingly agree, as revealed by the fact that none of the Spanish prime ministers realised an official visit to Russia in bilateral terms, until May 1999. This fact has raised some complaints among the few Spanish firms operating in Russia.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Spain and Russia had something in common as both countries harboured important anarchist movements. At the start of the 21st century, Russia is the most sensitive issue on the Northern agenda. However, for Spain, Russia is merely another bargaining card for the EU negotiation tables. A bargaining card which, if played well, could, for instance, assist in the balancing of the Eastern and the Southern dimensions of the European Union.

From the Spanish perspective, the Fourth enlargement, other than raising some historical resentment, also hinted at some future problems.[17] First, the large/small countries division was one of the main worries of the Spanish government, which supported the idea of reforming the EU institutions before the Northern enlargement. In order to make its point, the Spanish government used the three Nordic countries as an example to show that they have two votes more than Spain in the Council even if they have a smaller population. In fact, the image of a "Nordic bloc" has been used by the Spanish government to explain how difficult it is to defend Mediterranean interests (agriculture) in the EU institutions, should they be dominated by small/Northern and industrially-oriented countries. Second, the "rich/poor" countries division was present in the Spanish documents during the Northern enlargement. At that time, the Spanish government insisted on making sure that the new members would share the *acquis* in terms of solidarity and redistribution through common policies and funds. Institutional and budget structure reforms are issues under negotiation that will potentially create divergence between Spain and the Northern members.

Notes

[1] Christopher Hill, "National Interests – the insuperable obstacles?", in *National Foreign Policies and European Political Co-operation* ed. by Christopher Hill (London, Allen and Unwin, 1983) p. 187.

[2] Nicholas van Praag, "Political co-operation and Southern Europe: case studies in crisis management", in *European Political Co-operation: Towards a foreign policy for Western Europe,* ed. by David Allen et al. (London: Butterwoth Scientific, 1982) p. 102.

[3] See Richard Gillespie, *The Spanish Socialist Party* (London: Oxford U.P., 1988).

[4] José Maria Areilza, *Diario de un ministro de la monarquía* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1983).

[5] Salustiano del Campo, *La opinión pública española y la política exterior. Informe Incipe 1998* (Madrid: Incipe, 1998).

[6] Robert Keohane and Stanley Hoffmann, "Institutional Change in Europe in the 1980s", in *The New European Community. Decision-making and Institutional Change,* ed. by R. Keohane and S. Hoffmann (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991) p. 14.

[7] Esther Barbé, *La política europea de España* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1999) (the book is partly based on the author's yearly contribution to Werner Weidenfeld and Wolfgang Wessels (ed.), Jahrbuch der Europäischen Integration, Institüt für Europäische Politik. Europa Union Verlag).

[8] Esther Barbé, "Balancing Europe's Eastern and Southern Dimensions". In Jan Zielonka(ed.), *Paradoxes of European Foreign Policy* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1998) pp. 117-130.

[9] Esther Barbé, "Spanish Security Policy and the Mediterranean Question", *EU Foreign and Security Policy: Why so difficult?,* ed. by Kjell Eliassen, (London: Sage, 1998) pp. 147-160.

[10] Villalonga Campos, *Diario de Sesiones del Senado-Comisión, 237.* (1998) p. 11.

[11] *Eurobarometer,* Eurobarometer, 50 (March 1999).

[12] Dictamen, "Dictamen de la Comisión Mixta para la Unión Europea en relación con el informe elaborado por la ponencia sobre consecuencias para España de la ampliación de la Unión Europea y reformas institucionales (Conferencia intergubernamental, 1996), *Boletín Oficial de las Cortes Generales.* (Sección Cortes Generales, Serie A, 29 December, 82 (1995) p. 19.

[13] José Maria Aznar, "Comparecencia del gobierno ante el pleno de la Cámara, de conformidad con lo dispuesto por el artículo 203 del reglamento, para informar sobre la reunión del Consejo Europeo celebrada los días 12 y 13 de diciembre en Luxemburgo", *Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados* (Pleno), 17 December, 127 (1997).

[14] Abel Matutes, "España en Europa", *Política Exterior*, 52. (1996)

[15] *The Reality of Aid. An independent review of Development Co-operation 1997-1998* ed. by Judith Randel and Tony German, (London: Earthscan 1997).

[16] Salustiano del Campo, La opinión pública española y la política exterior. Informe Incipe 1998, (Madrid: Incipe, 1998).

[17] Felipe González, *Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados* (Pleno), 15 December, 38 (1993) p. 1751.

Irish confirmation: Support to other small and neutral members

Jill Donoghue

This chapter will cover three aspects of the debate on the Northern Dimension in Ireland. First, it will interpret the general perceptions of the Northern Dimension amongst the Irish officials. Second, it will focus on EU and Irish relations with Russia and finally it will address the role of "neutrals" in the light of recent developments in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and in the context of the proposed new defence capability for the EU.

Introduction

At a seminar on the Northern Dimension in Helsinki on February 26th 1999, Irish MEP, Pat Cox,[1] commented that the Northern Dimension adds "a vital new strategic dimension into the politics of the European Union". Mr Cox pointed out that the accession of Finland and Sweden to the European Union in 1995 added a Nordic dimension to the EU in geographical terms, extending the Union eastwards and creating a shared 1300 km external border between the European Union and the Russian Federation. He interprets the geographical scope of the Northern Dimension in broad terms including the Barents and Arctic regions, whereas in Ireland, it is understood to encompass the three Baltic states, the Nordic countries and North-West Russia. All five countries within the Northern group are viewed as active participants in the process, due to the strong sense of political community which exists between them.

Awareness of the concept of a Northern Dimension is limited to the foreign ministry officials in Ireland. It has had little impact on the general public or in the parliamentary or political arenas. The concept does not arise in political debates and, in particular, the security aspect of the Northern Dimension arouses little attention. Ireland's peripheral location in Europe and the consequent absence of immediate geopolitical proximity to security flashpoints ensures a physical and psychological distance from the major sources of instability. This has generated over time a lack of sensitivity to security threats in general. However, there is a view that the EU priority placed on this region should be high due to its geopolitical location on the external borders of the EU. While the region is ranked as important on the scale of Irish interests, the Northern Dimension could be upgraded to vital, if a significant deterioration in the situation in Russia threatened the cohesion of the Union or security in the Northern region in general.

Irish perception of the Northern Dimension

The term Northern Dimension is associated in Ireland with the Finnish government proposal at the Luxembourg Council in December 1997, for an initiative to develop a Northern Dimension to the policies of the EU. The sequence of the development of the proposal is understood as follows: In November 1998, the European Commission published a report on the Northern Dimension, and at the Vienna summit, in December 1998, the European Council welcomed the Finnish initiative to host a high level conference on the Northern Dimension to EU policy in the second half of 1999, during the Finnish EU Presidency.

On March 4 1999, Finnish Prime Minister, Paavo Lipponen, indicated a more focused approach to the Northern Dimension

when he announced that Finland intended to use its Presidency of the EU to implement the Common Strategy (the new co-operation pact between the EU and Russia, which was adopted at the Cologne summit in June 1999). He described this strategy as "a concrete stage in creating the Northern Dimension, one which will lead to a new agenda with Russia",[2] covering a range of co-operative projects on cross-border issues such as pollution, transnational crime and terrorism.

Ireland supports the Finnish proposal to co-ordinate EU policies on the Northern dimension, many of which, (trade, energy and environment) have been dealt with separately within the EU because it is anticipated that such an approach could generate synergy effects, and would allow the EU to prioritise and drive policy initiatives. This holds true from a security perspective also, where the EU is seen to provide a comprehensive approach to security across pillars two and three. Ireland also acknowledges existing regional co-operation in the framework of the Baltic Council and the Barents Sea Council (CBSS). Furthermore, Russian participation in the CBSS, which has set up a special commissioner for minority rights, is seen as a move in the right direction in terms of sub-regional co-operation, aimed at fostering peaceful co-operation across divides.

The EU has a comparative advantage both in terms of its array of instruments and its structures of outreach. The Finnish idea of employing these instruments horizontally across different sectors and pillars is reflected in the Common Strategy on Russia. The PHARE and TACIS programmes and the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA) with Russia are also instrumental in assisting the Northern region.

The practice in the Irish foreign ministry has been to see the Northern Dimension primarily in economic terms, as original Finnish government proposals excluded security policy. Hence the inclusion of the term security in the TEPSA project on the

"Northern Security Dimension" is perceived as a theoretical construct, because the Finns and the Swedes traditionally avoid compartmentalising security issues. The indivisibility of European security is regarded as a key principle of the OSCE, which applies *urba omnes*. The Finns and the Swedes are understood not to favour regionalising the issue of security, although they differ from the French and the Germans in this regard. Ireland's position is that it supports regional security co-operation in so far as it buttresses the foreign policy objectives of the EU and remains part of a pan-European, transatlantic security system. The Irish policy elite favour the development of regional co-operation at all levels and view the Northern Dimension as complementary to the Mediterranean dimension of the EU, which was crystallised in the Barcelona Process in 1995.

Overall, the Irish policy officials take a positive stance on policy towards this region. The countries involved are generally perceived to be small innovative states characterised by a readiness to learn. While Denmark and Sweden are seen to be constrained by domestic concerns and to a certain extent reluctant Europeans due, *inter alia*, to their stance on EMU and their rather sceptical view of further integration, the Finns are perceived as effective policy activists who are enthusiastic about all aspects of EU integration, both in terms of participating in the first wave of EMU and their sympathetic stance on deepening the Union.

The decision by Finland to showcase the Northern Dimension during its EU Presidency was also seen as an attempt by the Finns to develop awareness of the region and its problems amongst the member states and to avoid marginalisation of the region within the EU. There is considerable empathy in Ireland for the predicament of the Baltic states as they too share the common heritage of living in an asymmetric dyad – in the shadow of a larger neighbour.

It is interesting to note that the concept of a Northern security dimension also conjures up other associations in Ireland, which predate the Finnish initiative, as the Irish government commissioned a security committee to work on the issue of Baltic security during its EU presidency, to analyse the predicament of the Baltic countries and to evaluate the importance of sub-regional co-operation. Hence, there is an awareness amongst officials in the Department of Foreign Affairs, of the importance of the Northern Security Dimension, the definition of which is understood to extend beyond the remit of hard/military security to include soft security issues such as human security, the development of the respect for human rights, state building and development of civil societies.

From the perspective of the Irish policy elite there are four key points to the Northern Dimension:
– a broad concept of security
– co-operation between the Nordic and Baltic states
– integration with the EU as a parallel process,
– and, by implication, the development of peaceful co-operative relations with Russia (although the scope of relations with Russia was originally understood in the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs as referring to North-West Russia and its relations with the Baltic region, rather than EU/Russian relations in their entirety, as covered by the Common Strategy document).

Apart from building bridges to Russia, the main challenges to the Nordic countries are perceived to be of a civilian nature. They comprise problems of political stability, environmental risks, such as the safe storage of nuclear waste in North-West Russia, the threat from nuclear power plants in the Kola peninsula, Leningrad and Lithuania, Third Pillar issues of trans-national organised crime, immigration and minority issues. In particular, ecological problems which affect the Union as a whole present new challenges in the field of soft security.

On the foreign policy side, the priorities are to secure a stable

and prosperous zone on the borders of the EU, limit any potential volatility in the region and avoid antagonising Russia. Despite the presence of nuclear submarines in the region, and military remnants of the old Soviet structure in Kaliningrad, the Baltic region is generally regarded as stable. The considerable military co-operation between the Nordics and the Baltic states in the context of the PfP is acknowledged by Irish officials. The PfP itself is regarded as soft defence and the enhanced democratic control of the military in the region is seen as a positive consequence of this form of co-operation.

Another important issue is the prospect of EU enlargement towards the Baltics, which raises the profile of the Northern Dimension on the EU foreign policy agenda. According to EU Commissioner for External Relations, Chris Patten,[3] the Northern Dimension will increasingly become part of the external relations of the EU as enlargement brings in new members to the Union. The new Commission strategy agreed at the Helsinki summit to open negotiations with Latvia and Lithuania amongst others, and adopt a regatta approach rather than the previous two-wave approach to enlargement has been fully endorsed by the Irish government. The policy elite is aware of the attraction of the security dividend which EU membership would offer, yet systemic reform of the economies of the applicant states and adherence to fulfillment of the Copenhagen criteria without undue privilege or delay is advocated as the basis for accession of all the applicant countries.

Another consideration in this regard is the need to balance accession of the Baltic states with the possibility of creating new divisions in Europe, particularly *vis-à-vis* Russia. According to James Kurth[4], the new Baltic order will see the Baltics as the East of the West, not the West of the East and will give primacy to Baltic economic, cultural and political independence, while preserving Russian security interests.

In order to prepare the Irish public for the imminent

enlargement of the Union to the North-East, the Irish government will focus on the advantages it will bring in terms of increased stability and accessibility to new markets. There are already considerable economic links between Ireland and this region and they will be fostered by the accession of new states, which will open up the prospect of further trade and investment in the region.

The cultural aspect of the Northern Dimension is not perceived to be of prime importance from an Irish perspective, although there is an awareness of the close network of cultural ties between the Nordics and the Baltics and of problems with the integration of russophone minorities into the Baltic societies. However, Irish links to the region have evolved in the context of a special relationship between Ireland and Estonia, due to the similarity of both countries as small states with a colonial past dominated by a larger neighbour. Bilateral projects are in progress in assisting both Estonia and Latvia with their public administration and democracy building and official visits by the Taoiseach and the Foreign Minister to both countries have copper fastened this relationship. Briefings to delegations from the Baltic states by the government and the Institute of European Affairs in Dublin have increased exponentially and there is an increasing interest among the applicant states in the success of the Irish model in the EU.

Finnish efforts to persuade the EU of the necessity for proactive policy engagement with Russia are recognised as having contributed to the co-ordinated EU Common Strategy policy towards Russia. This document addresses post-Soviet sensitivities by presenting Russia as a partner in an initiative which operates at all levels of government including regional and local levels, where the focus is on developing cross-border co-operation. Ireland strongly supports the development of a multi-dimensional long-term relationship between the EU and Russia. It has also played its role in the development of EU/

Russian relations within the common framework of EU policies and in managing this relationship through the PCA. It continues to be a core element in the relationship between Russia and the EU, designed at promoting the integration of Russia into a wide area of co-operation with the EU. Regrettably, Russian actions in Chechnya have overshadowed and retarded the pace of developments in EU-Russia relations and the very serious difference between the EU and Russia over the handling of the Chechen crisis has placed much of the positive developments in EU-Russia relations in jeopardy.

The European Council in Helsinki decided that the EU would have to review its relations with Russia in the light of Chechnya and draw its conclusions. This involved redrafting the planned activities under the Common Strategy, reorientation of TACIS programmes for Russia towards democracy and the rule of law. It was also decided not to carry over unspent food aid from 1999 to 2000 and to suspend consideration of additional trade preferences to Russia under the General System of Preferences (GSP). On the other hand, Ireland, like its partners in the EU, is aware of the need to make a proportional response to economic and strategic relations with Russia and to avoid an isolationist stance, which could affect the EU's longer term strategic relationship with Russia.

Key elements in the Northern Dimension

In the context of the Northern Dimension, Russia is seen as a key actor on the security stage particularly in terms of the four S's: security, stability, sustainable development and the successful exploitation of natural resources.

On the security side, emphasis is placed particularly on the indivisibility of security, on the avoidance of grey zones and on the advisability of the Baltics not to adopt a provocative policy

towards Russia because of the possibility of a hostile Russian reaction to such developments. The Northern Dimension in particular is valued for its contribution to security management, e.g. its capacity to mediate tensions in Russia aroused by proposed enlargement of the EU and NATO. Finland is perceived as a role model for the problem-solving capacity of the neutrals in the region.

The Irish policy elite does not give voice in the public domain to negative future scenarios *vis-à-vis* Russia, but is sensitive to the fragility of Russia's transition. There is also an awareness of the increased confidence of the Baltic states, which is buttressed by the Russian desire to be part of the general European integration process and a constructive partner within the European security architecture. However, Irish policy makers support the UN view[5] that no one security institution in isolation can solve the multifaceted problems of the post-Cold War environment. The Irish policy elite acknowledge the role which the OSCE, the PfP, and the EACP play in the Northern Security Dimension in terms of confidence building measures and see the solution in a concert of institutions, with the EU as a successful agent in promoting peace and stability. In particular, it welcomes the opportunity to work alongside Russia in the context of the PfP and the EACP, which Ireland joined on 9 November and 1 December 1999 respectively.

While Ireland welcomes co-operation and dialogue with Russia, the prevalent view is that consultation rather than the direct involvement of Russia in dealing with the Northern Dimension is preferable, as the latter would have implications for EU/US relations, if the US were not involved, hence the suggestion of quasi-institutional co-operation on security matters does not seem to be an option at this time. Furthermore, the integrity of EU decision making rests on the agreement of its member states, so the policy prescription favoured is to offer Russia as much consultation as possible, short of a formal role in

decision making.

Several instances of potential conflict arise in the area of internal security where a role for the Northern Dimension could contribute to stability in the region.

Following EU integration of Poland and Lithuania, the Kaliningrad oblast, which belongs to the Russian Federation, will become a Russian enclave within the EU. Although there is recognition of the political and economic difficulties which could evolve with Kaliningrad post enlargement, the possibility of dealing with Kaliningrad in the context of regional cooperation in the Northern Dimension is seen to have great potential. The Kaliningrad oblast particularly affects relations between the Russian Federation, Lithuania and Poland. At issue is not the status of Kaliningrad, but the Russian desire for regularised land access route via Lithuania/Poland.[6] Once the candidate countries become EU members, the unique situation of Kaliningrad will require appropriate solutions for customs, transport and visa policies. The initiative by the CBSS to construct a *Via Hanseatica* from St Petersburg via Tartu, Riga, Siauliai, Kaliningrad and Gdansk to Szczecin and Lubeck is one example of the contribution that Nordic cooperation can make to regional problems. The lack of a decision by Russia on economic development of the region, Russian military concentration in the area, and Lithuanian territorial claims on Kaliningrad are problematic and continue to harbour the potential for disputes.

Other factors such as frontier management and control of the free movement of people and minority questions could also be addressed within the Northern Dimension. Co-operation in these areas is regarded as significant in terms of relativising old dividing lines, while preventing the development of new ones. The ratification of the 1997 agreement on borders between Russia and Latvia remains an issue of concern and the Irish government continues to urge Russia to ratify these agreements and fully recognise the territorial independence of the Baltic

states. There is an awareness of the issue linkage between the naturalisation of russophone minorities in Latvia and the ratification of the border agreement. Hence the treatment of the Russian minority implicitly touches on relations between the EU and the Russian Federation and can either cause conflicts or be politically instrumentalised.

The deeper commitment to help combat illegal trafficking in drugs and nuclear material, and the proposal to increase the exchange of experts between the EU and Russia on cross- border crime, to organise seminars on different types of money laundering, and to develop co-operation with Europol are welcomed as positive developments and indicate the synergy between the Northern Dimension and the Third Pillar initiatives in the EU.

On the Irish side, an agreement on combating drug trafficking and co-operation in fighting organised crime was signed between Ireland and Russia in 1999, a memorandum of understanding was signed between Russia and Ireland on cooperation between police forces in 1999, and Russia appointed a defence attaché to Ireland, Major General Vyacheslav Glagolav, to discuss peace-keeping activities and co-operation in the field of specialist training with his Irish counterparts.

Finally, projects in the framework of the Northern Dimension on sustainable development and environmental clean up in the Baltic region are welcomed as a benefit for the EU as a whole, not just for the Baltic region, as pollution knows no borders. Furthermore, Russia's enormous natural resources are regarded as a strategic reserve for Europe's future energy demands. Hence, proposed co-operation in the energy sector on the joint development of natural gas networks in the Northern region and on access to the Russian pipeline system are envisaged as projects with longer term benefits for both the EU and Russia, as the EU remains the major export market for Russia.

Russian relations

Ireland enjoys good bilateral relations with the Russian Federation, despite the disparity in size between the two countries. Furthermore, Irish political and economic interests dictate the establishment of closer relations with regions such as Russia. Economic figures indicate the importance for Ireland of Russia as a partner. In 1999, it was Ireland's 27th most important export market, with exports worth £223m, and although the economic crisis that hit Russia in August 1998 had a severe impact on business and worsened the short term prospects for Irish exporters and investors, Russia is still regarded as a market with some potential for a variety of sectors such as the food sector, the telecommunications sector, generic pharmaceuticals and the services sector (consultancy, architecture, construction and duty-free).

On the political front, Irish officials have shared a long working relationship with their Russian counterparts in the UN. Post-Soviet democratic Russia and Ireland share a common approach to several issues of concern to the international community: such as our common support for the OSCE as the focal point for European Security co-operation, our shared concern for a role for the UN in peace-keeping and conflict resolution and the principle of peaceful resolution of international disputes. Ireland's initiative on nuclear disarmament jointly launched with seven other countries on June 9th 1998 highlights a number of points of common interest between Russia and Ireland and is reflected in former President Yeltsin's proposal for withdrawal of all nuclear weapons back to the territories of the existing nuclear powers. However, during the course of its presidency of the Council of Europe, Ireland indicated its strong concern at alleged infringements of human rights in the Chechen war.

Towards a growing participation of neutrals

Turning to the issue of the compatibility of military non-alignment with the CFSP, the official Irish view is that non-membership of a military alliance does not pose an obstacle *per se* to the further developments of the CFSP. Instead, the major constraint on the development of a defence policy in the CFSP had, until recently, been the predominant role of NATO in the European security architecture and Britain's special relationship with the US. Indeed, the country most opposed to the development of a common defence policy in the CFSP was Britain. Paradoxically, Ireland's neutrality has been preserved since the end of the Cold War by British commitments to NATO, which resisted the development of an EU defence capacity and which also strengthened partition of the island of Ireland.

Three events (the St Malo initiative, the Cologne and Helsinki summits and the Kosovo crisis) have transformed the traditional debate between the Atlanticists and the Europeanists as to the preferred shape of a new European security architecture. They have fundamentally altered the parameters of the security debate and the notion of an integrated defence, which was shelved during the Amsterdam negotiations, has come to the fore again, raising the key question of who should be responsible for it. Defence in this context is interpreted as a military contribution to international crisis management in the context of the State's foreign and security policy.

While the Treaty of Amsterdam, which was ratified on May 1st 1999, provides the legal framework for discussions on this issue, the political basis is now provided by the Cologne and Helsinki Conclusions, which defined a European defence capacity as being a necessary component of a Common Foreign and Security Policy. This presents a series of policy challenges for the neutrals and non-militarily aligned member states in the EU.

Prior to Helsinki, and in keeping with the changing nature of

security challenges in the post-Cold War environment, the inclusion of the Petersberg Tasks in the Treaty of Amsterdam was seen as enhancing the possibilities for countries, which are not members of a military alliance, to play an active role with their EU partners in crisis management, peacekeeping and humanitarian activities. Furthermore, provisions for constructive abstention provided for flexibility in addressing future developments in this area.

While neutrality may be interpreted by some member states as a lack of solidarity in a core area of public policy, it could be argued that in the real world of policy making, non-membership of a military alliance does not preclude Member States from taking important initiatives in the area of security and defence. Tony Blair's comments at the Portschach summit, that he does not see neutrality as an "absolute barrier to engaging with this debate properly", and that it is necessary to be "alive to the sensitivities of countries that are neutral", endorsed this view.

As an example, it is worthwhile recalling that the agreement to incorporate the Petersberg Tasks into the Treaty of Amsterdam reflected close co-operation between Sweden and Finland and Ireland. In the course of the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), Finland and Sweden took a joint initiative, which proposed including the Petersberg Tasks in the new treaty. The Irish presidency followed up on this proposal and the final agreement, which emerged at Amsterdam from the Irish draft proposals, closely reflects the Finnish/Swedish initiative.

Furthermore, Ireland's tradition of military contribution to peacekeeping in the UN has demonstrated the value-added which Ireland can provide to the military aspect of joint crisis management. Ireland, Finland and Sweden's participation in SFOR, their agreement at an early stage to send monitors to Kosovo, their assistance with the management of the refugee crisis as the Kosovo crisis escalated, and the key role played by Finnish former President Martti Ahtisaari in brokering the final

breakthrough also indicate the contribution that small neutral and non-aligned countries can make to crisis management and the consolidation of democracy and civil society in Europe.

Thus non-membership of military alliances is not viewed as an obstacle to further development of the CFSP. Rather, the contribution of small non-aligned states can be a substantial and important element in the maintenance and consolidation of peace and security in Europe. Furthermore, from the Russian perspective,[7] the existence of traditions of neutrality in the Nordic/Baltic region largely account for the fact that it is perceived by Russia as the only region in Europe where, according to Arkady Moshes, Nato-mania has not become a prevailing trend i.e. where a commitment to neutrality serves to defuse Russian concerns about a possible Nato expansion to states which are contiguous to its borders.

It should also be noted that most neutrals see no difficulty in engaging in a structured association with military alliances in order to pursue co-operative security, so anxieties about neutrality are unfounded. The array of mutually reinforcing multilateral institutions in the security field offers a variety of possibilities to contribute to the development of European security based on the principles of inclusiveness, co-operation and interoperability. The Russian reaction to NATO bombing in Kosovo further endorses the view that a uniquely European Union force would be far less offensive to the political sensitivities in Russia, whose stability is of paramount importance to Europe's future.

Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP) presents new policy challenges

Since the St Malo Declaration and the conclusions of the Cologne and Helsinki summits, new patterns of security and

defence cooperation are evolving. Current discussions in the General Affairs Council on the new European Security and Defense Capacity, which are running parallel to the IGC may lead to a redefinition of neutrality in some Member States, as the core values that neutrality invokes are diffuse and often in contradiction with the pooling of sovereignty and responsibilities associated with membership of an international organisation.

The current Irish debate on a European defence policy reflects the awareness that Ireland has always been a psychological insider in terms of major developments in European integration and that a semi-detached approach to the CFSP/CESDP would damage Ireland's credibility in Europe and limit its ability to participate in and seriously influence the shaping of collective defence in the Union. It is argued that the debate on PfP represents just a small part of the decisions neutral countries like Ireland will have to make about their role in the broad emerging security architecture, about the framework in which to operate and the resources they are prepared to commit. It is nevertheless an important step for Ireland in terms of participating in the emerging agenda.

The announcement[8] on November 9, 1999 by the Irish Taoiseach that Ireland had agreed to join PfP signalled an appreciation by the policy elite of the need for Ireland to demonstrate political solidarity with its EU partners by fuller participation in security co-operation in Europe and of the requirement to develop a politically acceptable response to the emerging European security identity. According to an Irish Times/MRBI poll on November 2nd 1999, 59% of the population were in favour of this step. The associated advantages that membership of has PfP for Ireland, in terms of adapting the peacekeeping profile of Irish defence forces to the altered security environment, are mirrored in the shift in the EU debate on CESDP towards inclusivity and a broader definition of

security that encompasses societal as well as military threats.

Although the debate about an EU-led security arrangement is at an initial stage, the pace and scope of the debate has gained considerable momentum since the Helsinki summit, particularly with reference to the need for burden sharing with the US and the possibility of the EU being required to meet security challenges in regional European conflicts which do not engage US security interests. There is some concern amongst the "neutrals" that it will be led in its decision-making by an informal directoire of larger member states such as France, Germany and the UK, with a concomitant loss of voice for those not fully engaged in the institutional arrangements. Such an assumption by the larger powers underestimates the political resistance to such an approach. Ireland is intent on playing its role in shaping the new European security structures and the Irish policy elite realise that the current debate does not imply a choice between neutrality and an alliance but between isolationist passivity and voluntary engagement if it wishes to preserve its influence at the rapidly developing core of the EU's political system. The Irish government is already committed to allowing Irish troops to participate in the new EU Rapid Reaction Force, confident in the belief that the new developments do not threaten neutrality. The government will also participate fully in the new EU institutions to co-ordinate the EU's military and common foreign and security policy activities.

Within the framework of the Northern Dimension, Ireland's commitment to the OSCE principle of the indivisibility of European security means that the security of the EU's Northern partners Finland, Sweden and Russia is also a security concern for Ireland and precludes any form of geopolitical exceptionalism or isolationist definitions of Irish security interests. Furthermore, EU involvement in Nordic efforts to build bridges to Russia will strengthen the EU's role in the Baltic region and if the EU becomes a major player in relations with

Russia, its role as a global player will be enhanced. The EU's Common Strategy for Russia will be the key instrument in this regard.

On the issue of a defence dimension for the EU to counterbalance Russia, the Irish policy elite concurs with the Nordic view of the centrality of the US with regard to traditional defence, as NATO is seen to cater for the defence dimension, while the CFSP/CESDP is seen as the forum for dealing with the collective security/common defence of the Union, which is understood not as defence of the Union against an external aggressor but as crisis management at and beyond its borders, and the Petersberg Tasks.

As military defence of territorial borders is now just one element of a broader security agenda, the focus of a European defence policy on extending and maintaining peace and stability on the continent of Europe, via collective security measures, should not pose a problem for the "neutral" countries.

Conclusions

The prevalent view in Ireland is that the priority of the Northern Dimension will depend largely on political developments in the region. The prospect of Baltic enlargement is expected to increase the weight of the Northern Dimension in the EU via the impact of the Nordic administrative culture and Nordic policy priorities in the EU. The significance of the Northern Dimension should increase further post enlargement as it is seen as the primary means by which peace and security can be extended to the region. While EU enlargement to the Baltics is not seen as a destabilising factor in terms of Russian perceptions, it is generally recognised that NATO enlargement to the Baltics could have a provocative effect. Hence Russian sensitivities in this regard continue to be balanced by EU concern not to

damage relations with Russia. Recent improvements in NATO/ EU relations and the successful enlargement of NATO to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic bode well for future EU/Russian relations.

One caveat should be introduced at this point i.e. since direct military threats to Russia are more centred in the South of Russia and south of its borders, this means that the focus of security interests may shift from the Northern Dimension to the Northern Caucauses and the Balkans, effectively reducing the significance of the Northern Dimension on the security screen of other EU member states.

While the Nordic countries are regarded as being very active within the EU in promoting their interests and priorities and the Finns, in particular, are regarded as having been successful in putting the Northern Dimension on the EU agenda by consistent lobbying and by ensuring that the Northern Dimension has relevance for all Member States (e.g. emphasis on a stable Russia, prevention of nuclear danger, reducing environmental risks, combating organised crime), the impetus to continue to focus on the Northern Dimension will have to come from the Nordic EU member states.

Finland's role to date as an interlocutor between the EU and Moscow in the security field is acknowledged in Ireland and the use of a multilateral framework to promote problem-solving between neighbours in the Northern Dimension is considered a necessary complement to the EU Common Strategy on Russia. Indications from the Swedes that they will highlight the Northern Dimension during the Swedish EU presidency and the expectation of the adoption of an Action Plan for the Northern Dimension at the Feira summit in June 2000 will continue to raise awareness of the Northern Dimension in Ireland.

The Irish policy elite endorses the Nordic vocation of taking public policy seriously in terms of a co-operative approach to its formation and implementation. The consensus is that Northern

countries should continue to be proactive in co-operating with the EU and the OSCE and other regional organisations in promoting prosperity and security in the Nordic/Baltic region, albeit with the caveat that regional co-operation should be subsumed within Union activities.

For its part, Ireland will continue to develop links with the Nordic and the Baltic states, as there is a clear perception of opportunities for co-operation in both the economic and political spheres. The geo-strategic situation of this region on the EU's borders with Russia will ensure that it remains an important item on the EU security agenda.

Notes

[1] Speech by Pat Cox, MEP, at seminar on the Northern Dimension organised by the Finnish Centre Party and the Swedish People's Party in Helsinki on February 29,1999.

[2] Interview with Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen in the *Financial Times*, 4 March 1999.

[3] Speech by Commissioner for External Relations, Chris Patten at the Conference of Foreign Ministers in Helsinki, November 1999.

[4] James Kurth: The Baltics: Between Russia and the West, in *Current History – a Journal of Contemporary World Affairs*, October 1999

[5] Ireland and the Partnership for Peace, An Explanatory Guide, Dept of Foreign Affairs, May 1999.

[6] Arkady Moshes, *Overcoming Unfriendly Stability, Russian Latvian Relations at the end of the 1990's*, (Helsinki – Bonn: Finnish Institute for International Affairs, 1999).

[7] See Arkady Moshes, Changing Security Environment in the Baltic Sea Region and Russia, in *Baltic Security – Looking towards the twenty first century* ed by Gunnar Arteus and Atis Lejins. (Latvian Institute of International Affairs Forsvarshogskolan, 1997).

[8] Dail Debates, Official Report, 2/11/99.

Finland's new policy: Using the EU for stability in the North

Tuomas Forsberg and Hanna Ojanen

"Security and stability in the North"

Finland's security has always depended on the overall stability in Northern Europe. This basic factor has not changed since Finland's EU membership, either. What has changed, however, is the perception of the role of the EU in this region. While military non-alignment is seen in the present situation as the best way for Finland to further regional stability in Northern Europe, EU membership has become increasingly central as a new tool in Finland's security policy. It goes without saying that Finland has tried to work to ensure that the EU shares the same concerns and views of the situation in the region.

In security terminology, "North" is just as likely to mean "East", or "North East" for the Finns. This is because the key issue in Finnish security policy has traditionally been the relationship with her Eastern neighbour, and the historical memories of previous wars still remain. Even though no immediate military security threats are perceived in the nearby areas, Russia is even now regarded as a factor of uncertainty. Therefore, traditional military security policy concerns still matter. In particular, Russia's relations with the Baltic states are seen as a potential factor of conflict. Hence, the central issues of Finnish security policy are the development of the relations between the EU and Russia and EU enlargement to include the Baltic states.

EU membership has been seen as contributing to Finland's national security by clarifying her international position, extending the "zone of stability" and creating a "community

based on solidarity". As a result, it is no longer regarded as possible that Russia and the West could go over Finland's head to decide her fate. As the prospects of Russia becoming an EU member are slim, it is nevertheless vital for Finland that a conflict between the EU and Russia be avoided and that Russia be linked to this "zone" or "community" in some other effective way.

Although Russia and the EU do not have any security problems, Finland emphasises the importance of creating measures that would enhance long-term security development in the region. In the post-Cold War era, Finnish views on how to deal with Russia have been shaped by the ideas of economic interdependence and democratic peace. Integration is seen as a peace strategy underlying the European Union. If it has worked in Western Europe, it should work for Europe as a whole. Finland has further argued that Russia needs Europe in the same way that Europe needs Russia. A democratic Russia is unlikely to get involved in a military conflict with the West; therefore supporting democracy is a long-term security objective for the EU in Northern Europe.

The potential security problems between Russia and the Baltic states are more acute. The Finns have been supporting the Baltic states in the process of building state structures while mitigating the potential problems with Russia relating to borders and minorities.[1] Although Finland has emphasised that all countries have the right to decide whether they are allied or not, EU membership is in Finland's view the timely issue, and NATO membership could be postponed. Finland has actively promoted the enlargement of the EU to the Baltic states, and to Estonia in particular, for security reasons. The accession of the Baltic states to the EU is considered vitally important in Finland because it consolidates the position of the Baltic states, but is not perceived as threatening by Russia in the same way as NATO enlargement would be.

At the same time, new security threats in the EU's Northern

region have been seen as more severe than traditional security concerns. Disparities in living standards between the EU and its neighbouring countries, adverse economic development and fragile political threats and social conditions in the nearby areas are regarded as the main source of such threats. They include organised crime, terrorism, illegal migration and environmental problems such as safety of the nuclear power plants, military and civilian nuclear waste management especially in the Kola region, the degradation of the Baltic Sea and even money laundering and trafficking in drugs and people and the development of crimes related to telecommunications, information security and the Internet are growing security concerns.[2] In the early 1990s, migration was seen as the most alarming problem, but environmental problems have been attracting more attention of late.

Since the early 1990s, Finland has been working for cross-border cooperation in the neighbouring areas, focusing on preventive measures. Alarm-systems for nuclear plants in the region have been set up, and efficient border control of Finnish borders with Russia and Estonia have been constructed in order to contain illegal immigration. However, international co-operation concerning internal security threats is not as well established as co-operation in the field of the environment.

The EU and its desired role in the North

The EU is seen as a key instrument and a central framework for Finnish security policy, including its relations to Russia and to the Baltic states. The EU's value as a political security factor has, however, less to do with its military capability and more to do with its 'soft' or civilian approach to security. There are, in particular, four things that Finland expects from the EU.

First of all, the EU should pay attention to the number of soft

security questions in the region. As the challenges Russia poses are seen in terms of a wide security concept, the EU as a civilian power already has the most relevant tools to deal with these problems. From the Finnish point of view, the EU is essential because it provides more resources and adds political weight in handling questions that Finland could never solve bilaterally with Russia. It is thus understandable that Finland has focused its energy on trying to develop Union-wide strategies and policies that support stability in Russia. In fact, unlike during the Cold War years, Finland now aims at multilateralising her relations with Russia.[3]

Secondly, the EU should emphasise its role as a political and normative community. As such, it takes Finland away from the Russian sphere of interest and "clarifies its international position". In this way the EU imports stability to the region with its further enlargement. Russia cannot take Finland or the Baltic states out of the context of the general European security order. Strengthening the Common Foreign and Security Policy also serves the Finnish interests of avoiding a resurrection of "great power politics" in the region by ensuring the equal participation of all EU member states, including itself, in the making of EU-Russian relations.

Thirdly, the EU is regarded as an optimal actor as it has a positive image in Russia. Working through the EU does not conflict with Russian security interests. Therefore, the EU should endeavour to maintain that image. It should also emphasise Russia's security concerns when it comes to, for example, minority questions in the Baltic states in accordance with its basic norms and principles.

Fourthly, in the Finnish view, the EU should be cautious in developing its hard security role. From Finland's perspective, NATO is more suitable for upholding hard military balance in the region. Not only are U.S. interests in the region regarded as more durable, but the EU is also regarded as being too weak a

military actor. If the EU were to develop a common defence too quickly, the damage would be twofold: not only would it risk changing the Russians' view of its nature from positive to negative, it might also decrease U.S. presence in the region without being able to replace its military capabilities.

Finnish foreign policy has thus aimed at strengthening the CFSP and enhancing the role of the EU in the region with such policy instruments as the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement and the Common Strategy on Russia. Furthermore, the Finnish initiative on a "Northern dimension" of the EU is a crucial instrument for developing the EU's role and policies in the whole Northern region.

The Northern Dimension initiative

The Finnish initiative on a "Northern Dimension" gives one a good idea of Finland's efforts to deal with the different kinds of security problems in the area. The initiative that was officially presented by Prime Minister Lipponen in Rovaniemi in September 1997 aimed at creating a coherent policy for the EU towards its Northern regions in the same way as it has created a Southern policy.[5]

The initiative supports Finland's overall strategy of multilateralising its own relations with Russia in the region, without causing any provocation. As the advisor to the president put it, "our own policy on Russia is partly transforming into the Northern Dimension of the Union".[5] Two ideas behind the initiative are noteworthy. Firstly, the EU's Northern Dimension would increase the general awareness of the Union about specific Northern concerns and make the Union's policies in the area more coherent and more efficient. Secondly, to quote Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen, "the basic aim [of the Finnish initiative on the Northern Dimension] is to integrate Russia into Europe as

a democracy and a market economy."[6] Indeed, relations to Russia form the most important part of the Northern Dimension: the initiative is primarily about strengthening the EU's foreign policy in the North and especially its relations with Russia.[7]

On a broader level, the initiative emphasises positive interdependence between the EU, Russia and the Baltic Sea region, and the aim of integrating Russia and the accession countries into European structures and into the WTO and the OECD through increased co-operation. The ultimate goal of the initiative is to reduce all dividing lines in the region. This can be achieved by narrowing down the disparities in living standards, removing obstacles to trade and investment, and furthering stability and security, human rights, democracy, the rule of law, a market economy, prosperity, employment, trade and economic co-operation. Furthermore, the initiative can be seen as an effort to assure the domestic audience of Finland's chances of benefiting from EU membership. Although the Finnish public is relatively satisfied with membership, the Finnish government still needs to show that the EU's action supports Finland's interests in areas that are geographically close to Finland.

The initiative is formulated in a way which excludes elements of traditional security policy. The focus has been on five areas in particular: natural resources, the environment, border management and development of transport and energy infrastructures. The potential areas of action and co-operation also include the fight against organised crime, migration and asylum issues, research co-operation, the building up of university networks, social welfare and health services, the prevention of communicable diseases, labour protection, employment services, the development of human resources and education systems, the information society, cultural projects, support for active grass-roots level participation of citizens, and the development of sound administrative practices and reliable statistics.

The reason why hard security questions are not part of the initiative stems from the fear that bringing in elements of security policy could altogether hinder the development of practical co-operation.[8] As even the Committee on the Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence Policy of the European Parliament concluded in its report on the Northern Dimension in spring 1999, "the Northern Dimension encompasses a broadly defined concept of security, but not in the military sense. Therefore it would not be appropriate for there to be a specific Northern Dimension to security policies".[9]

The initiative also reflects Finland's mental map of the "north". It has a natural geographical bias: it "builds" a region in which Finland is in the centre. The region in question is defined in a geographically extensive way, and, moreover, in a rather flexible way, too: there have been different variations as to what countries are actually involved. The region includes at least the Nordic countries – not only Finland, Sweden and Denmark but also the non-EU members Norway and Iceland – the Baltic states Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Russia's Northwestern areas together with the Kaliningrad oblast, Poland and Germany. Belarus might be included in the initiative later if it fulfils the necessary political conditions of working democracy, and even the northern parts of Scotland are sometimes mentioned.[10]

In the Finnish view, both the Barents Sea and the Baltic Sea regions are integral parts of the Northern Dimension region. The political focus in the Northern Dimension policies is, however, on the Baltic Sea area, especially in the accession countries and in northwestern Russia. A central part of the initiative is the co-ordination of the activities of existing subregional institutions in the area and the furthering of the EU's participation in their work. The EU is already a member of the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, but not yet of the Arctic Council, where, in Prime Minister Lipponen's words, "it should have a seat at the table".[11] The oldest regional institutions

in the area, the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers, were listed among the organisations involved somewhat later.[12]

The initiative also underlines the atlanticist tenet in Finnish foreign policy as the outlined institutional basis of the Northern Dimension, especially in the Barents region, draws the USA and Canada into the Northern Dimension co-operation. The enhancement of EU co-operation with the Arctic Council requires tighter co-operation with the USA and Canada. The EU's Transatlantic Dialogues with the USA and Canada could provide the institutional frame for handling Northern questions.[13] Hence, the Northern Dimension could give new substance to transatlantic co-operation.[14]

Russia is, however, the central factor in the Northern Dimension initiative. Finnish activities in shaping the EU's policies towards Russia, and thus the Northern Dimension initiative, are aimed at reassuring Russia that the EU membership of Finland or other states in the Baltic Sea region is not against Russia's perceived national interests. The Finnish efforts therefore contribute to international stability and stability in Russia, thus reducing potential security risks. Attention is drawn to the fact that Russia's centre of political gravity is different from that of the Soviet Union, as well as to the Russian concern for being treated as an equal partner in its relations with Europe.[15] In the Finnish view, Russia should be a high priority for the European Union in general, and Finland has stressed that Russia should be approached as a partner or collaborator rather than as an object of programmes and policies developed within the EU.[16]

In Finland, political debate on the Northern Dimension has been practically absent. The initiative has been widely supported, or at least handled in a neutral tone, by the press and the political opposition.[17] There are various reasons for this. First, the initiative has been used to increase the legitimacy of the EU

in Finland. Membership of a Union that duly takes into consideration the Northern problems appears more profitable than membership of a Union that ignores the North. Secondly, the Northern Dimension has also become a useful slogan that is widely used in different contexts because of the fact that it can be interpreted in so many different ways. In particular, economic issues connected to the initiative have been frequently discussed in seminars and conferences. The wider public perhaps puts more emphasis on combating environmental threats than on co-operation in, for instance, the field of energy or transportation.[18] According to a recent poll, however, most citizens feel that the content of the initiative has remained obscure.[19] This might be a third reason why the initiative has not evoked political criticism: there is nothing to be spoken against as long as the contents are unspecified. Yet, one also has to add the historically-based strong consensus on foreign policy in Finland: official initiatives are hardly ever openly criticised.[20]

In November 1999, an informal meeting of foreign ministers was organised in Helsinki to discuss the Commission's Interim Report on the Northern Dimension and the views of the countries concerned. The conference conceived the "concept as "useful in enhancing European security, stability, democratic reforms and sustainable development".[21] The meeting was, however, a disappointment in the sense that the foreign ministers of the EU countries did not even attend, with the exception of the host, the Finnish Foreign Minister. The incident may well have reflected the lack of real interest in the member states towards the initiative.

Russia's reactions are obviously centrally important for the success of the initiative. Finland has tried to keep Russia informed about the development of the initiative, encouraging contacts while developing the initiative further. For Russia, the positive features of the initiative are the envisaged partner role in this development and the exclusion of military aspects,

NATO and US involvement. Foreign Minister Primakov supported the Northern Dimension initiative when visiting Finland in the summer of 1998.[22] In his view the initiative helps develop the relations between the EU and Russia even though there have been some suspicions about it creating tensions between Moscow and the regions or the EU countries "colonialising" Russia.

In the other Nordic states, there has been some criticism of the Finnish initiative. It was seen as Finnish "Alleingang" as it was introduced suddenly without prior consultations or common preparation in, for example, the Nordic Council.[23] In February 1998, some Danish and Swedish members of the Nordic Council maintained that the Northern Dimension was a continuation of the Finnish policy of listening too much to its Eastern neighbour that was typical of the Finns during the Cold War. This was immediately rejected; Foreign Minister Halonen was astonished at the diplomatic inappropriateness of this wording and argued that the initiative had been well received by the Nordic Foreign Ministers. At the same time, however, she expressed the view – perhaps characteristic of Finnish EU-orientedness – that Nordic support was not essential: it was more important to get the support of other EU states.

Lessons and strategies for the future

Finland has made the EU a central tool in its security policy and has tried to get the Union more deeply involved in Northern security concerns. However, using the EU as a tool might not, in the end, be that easy. Finland has endeavoured to keep its security concerns – notably Russia and cross-border cooperation – on the EU agenda, but it is hard to achieve this alone.

What kinds of lessons and strategies can be learned from the Finnish attempt to create a specific 'Northern Dimension' for the

EU to ensure that attention is paid to all these questions? First of all, from an agenda-setting perspective, the Northern Dimension initiative was evidently a success. Finland was able to put forward a new concept and mobilise support for it so that the Northern Dimension was in a relatively short time span established as an item on the EU agenda. The invitation to all relevant actors, partner countries and EU institutions alike, to contribute to the formulation of the initiative was one of the ways which served to make them more committed to its further development.

Yet, in the end, the success of the initiative seems uncertain. One might argue that the fact that the Northern Dimension figures on the EU agenda does not *per se* guarantee anything and does not in itself offer any answers to the multiplicity of security problems that was alluded to at the start of this paper. The novel elements of the initiative, real scrutiny and co-ordination of the Union's activities, promotion of the Finnish pragmatic step by step approach to Russia and cross-border co-operation on the EU's outer borders, together with a real participation of non-EU countries in the decision-shaping (if not decision-making) in the EU are also still anticipated.

The ministerial conference of November failed to excite maximum attendance not only because of lack of interest or bad preparation, but because it was overshadowed by the war in Chechnya. Indeed, the political and economic situation in Russia constitutes a major problem that the Northern Dimension and other forms of co-operation now have to face. Both the economic crisis experienced in Russia in August 1998 and the situation in Northern Caucasus add new difficulties to the development of the relations between the EU and Russia.

There might be growing pessimism towards the likelihood of developing EU-Russian relations in the direction that is hoped by Finland and the EU. From the Finnish point of view, however, the current political difficulties should not be seen as an obstacle

but rather as a sign that the work and political dialogue in this field should be intensified. Finns fear that the momentum should not be lost as the current Russian leaders value the EU more than their predecessors and their potential successors. In all, the crises imply an increasing need to do something. Thus, the way in which the Finnish authorities have justified the further development of the Northern Dimension is to say that the consistent long-term EU strategies and predictability should be prioritised over any short-term tactics or hasty political conclusions of current crises. This also explains why Finland is happy even with a slow advancement of the issue. Finnish officials tend to emphasise that the initiative has already provided some "added value" through increased transparency and synergies in EU policies, the new format including the partner countries in the process and efforts for creating more favourable conditions for concrete projects.[24]

In order to convince the EU countries of the continued relevance of the Northern issues, and in order to make progress in finding concrete ways of action in questions of security, Finland might be better off seeking additional support from the other Nordic EU countries. The late recognition of the role of the Nordic countries in Northern Dimension policies might have actually hindered the development of the initiative. Enhancing stronger co-operation among the Nordic countries could be essential for the future of the co-operation in combating the security threats in the region through an efficient EU involvement. It is without doubt the Northern countries themselves – including the partner countries – that can best outline the concrete proposals for action. The EU institutions, more focused on the formulation of guidelines and general strategies, and without experience of the Northern concerns, are not necessarily the most appropriate partners for this task.

Is, then, the EU an efficient actor in the field of Northern security questions, as Finland hopes? It seems that Finland's

intentions of involving the EU directly in regional activities are not easy to accomplish; the EU as a whole is not likely to support specifically Northern delineations of its policies. Nevertheless there are several indirect ways in which the EU can serve the security interests in the North. The process of enlargement is a primary example here, and Finland is definitely a strong supporter of enlargement. The EU is also developing in the field of crisis management, and this increased capacity of action could mean that the EU is becoming a potentially even more effective tool for policies in the North. However, it remains to be seen what the overall effect of this development is on the aim of "stability and security in the North" and whether the indirect approaches continue to be useful, too.

Notes

[1] See The European Security Development and Finnish Defence. Report by the Council of State to Parliament 17 March 1997; Tapani Vaahtoranta – Tuomas Forsberg, "Finland's Three Security Strategies", in Mathias Jopp/Sven Arnswald (eds.), *The European Union and the Baltic States. Visions Interests and Strategies for the Baltic Sea Region*. Programme of the Northern Dimension of the CFSP vol. 2. (Helsinki – Bonn: Finnish Institute of International Affairs – Institut für Europäische Politik, 1998).

[2] See Lea Ahoniemi, *"Suomea koskevat uudet ei-sotilaalliset turvallisuusuhkatekijät"*, Suomen maanpuolustuskorkeakoulun tutkimusselosteita 1999; Timo Kivimäki – Christopher Ulrich, *Transnational Risks and International Security in the Baltic Area and Post-Soviet Russia.* Police College of Finland. Scientific Research Report no. 3. (Helsinki: Edita 1998); Johan Bäckman, *"The Inflation of Crime in Russia"*, National Research Institute of Legal Policy, Helsinki 1998, Ahoniemi, 1999.

[3] See Christer Pursiainen, Finland's Security Policy Towards Russia. From Bilateralism to Multilateralism. *UPI Working Papers 14* (1999).

[4] See Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen, Rovaniemi 15.9.1997. See also Paavo Lipponen, 'Euroopan unionin pohjoinen ulottuvuus',

speech at the University of Oulu, 19 October 1998.

[5] See "Kylmän sodan päättymiseen ei osattu varautua" Interview with Alpo Rusi, then Advisor to the President of Finland, *Kaleva*, August 4, 1996.

[6] 'Finland seeks to implement pact between EU and Russia', *Financial Times* 5 March 1999.

[7] President Ahtisaari in a speech in Rovaniemi in October 1998, see *Helsingin Sanomat* 6 October 1998.

[8] See Ambassador Markus Lyra in a seminar on Finland and the Northern Dimension of the EU, Itämeri-instituutti, Tampere, 2 February 1999.

[9] See European Parliament, Session Documents A4-0209/99, 22 April 1999.

[10] See, e.g., Kari Liuhto, *Euroopan unionin pohjoinen ulottuvuus. Mihin se itse asiassa ulottuukaan?* Pan-European Institute, Turku School of Economics and Business Administration C2/1999, pp. 12-13. Lipponen included the northern areas of Great Britain in the Northern Dimension region in his speech in a seminar on Finland and the Northern Dimension of the EU -Seminar, The Baltic Institute of Finland, Tampere 22 February 1999.

[11] Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen, joint meeting of the Nordic Council and the Assembly of the Baltic States, Helsinki 9 February 1999.

[12] Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen, joint meeting of the Nordic Council and the Assembly of the Baltic States, Helsinki 9 February 1999.

[13] Professor Esko Antola in a seminar on Finland and the Northern Dimension of the EU, The Baltic Institute of Finland, Tampere 22 February 1999, Director Timo Summa, the European Commission, seminar on the Economics of the Northern Dimension, ETLA, Helsinki 15 November 1999.

[14] Director General for Political Affairs Pertti Torstila, Conference of Finnish Consuls in the United States, Virginia 21 May 1999.

[15] 'Policies for the Northern Dimension'. Speech by Ambassador Peter Stenlund, Bonn, 1 December 1998.

[16] 'Pohjoinen ulottuvuus Venäjä-politiikkaa', interview with Ari Heikkinen, head of the unit for the Northern Dimension at the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, in *Venäjän aika* 4/98, pp. 6-8.

[17] E.g. Esko Aho at the seminar on the Northern Dimension, organised by the Finland-Russia Society, 2 March 1999.

[18] The most important issues listed in the poll were nuclear safety,

cleaning up the Baltic Sea, security in Northern Europe and improving living conditions in Eastern and Northern Finland. Returning Karelia to Finland, decreasing NATO's importance in the area and fostering Russia's membership in the EU were not seen as important objectives, *Suomalaisten EU-kannanotot*. Syksy 1998. Centre for Finnish Business and Policy Studies, Helsinki 1998.

[19] *Suomalaisten EU-kannanotot*. Syksy—1999. Centre for Finnish Business and Policy Studies, Helsinki 1999.

[20] Hanna Ojanen, How to Customize Your Union: Finland and the "Northern Dimension of the EU", *The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Northern Dimension Yearbook 1999.*

[21] Conclusion of the Foreign Ministers' Conference on the Northern Dimension. Helsinki, 12 November 1999.

[22] *Helsingin Sanomat*, 31 May 1998.

[23] *Vasabladet*, 17 February 1998.

[24] Ambassador Peter Stenlund, *"EU´s Northern Dimension: Future Perspectives"*, The European Finance Convention Foundation, 22 November 1999.

Belgian ambivalence: Flemish and Walloon interests

Christian Franck
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European integration, western security and Central Africa have been the major issues which have determined the shaping of the Belgian foreign policy. Relations with the North of Europe consisted mainly of bilateral cooperation with Nordic countries before the Finnish and Swedish accession to the EU, and the prospect for a progressive integration of the Baltic states into the EU has aroused awareness that a "Northern Dimension" of the EU is becoming a growing regional reality which also includes the relationship with Russia. But to claim that the Belgian policy-makers' perception of this Northern area represents something specific would be overstating the issue. Even Northern security issues are regarded in Belgium as an extension of Central European security and stability.

In the last decade, the Northern Dimension of European policies has been endowed with new significance. It has become a genuine dimension for the European Union. It also represents an area of intensive relations with Russia. For their part, the Baltic states, for which Belgium had always expressed sympathy, are considered as countries which are to be integrated into the EU. Even if their security interests were to be seriously taken into account, Belgium, like some other European partners, doesn't envisage that accession to NATO, which would create immediate strong tension with Moscow, would be the appropriate way to deal with their security concerns.

Even if, in Belgium, the Northern Security Dimension of the EU has not been perceived as a central issue, the political

relationship with Russia, support for the Baltic states' accession to the EU and economic co-operation with the Baltic countries are matters of sustained interest for the Belgian authorities.

Vital and important Belgian foreign policy interests

Among the vital interests for Belgium, European integration, which secures the best western security, common values and an open economy represent the most important geopolitical assets for a country which for centuries has been a battlefield between the great powers and whose prosperity depends on exports. Since the Second World War, Belgium has made its commitment to European unification the mainstream of its foreign policy. The point to be emphasised here is that not only the CFSP in particular but also the EU as a whole helps Belgium to achieve its vital interests.

If the EC/EU brought peace to the immediate neighbourhood of Belgium, Belgian security and Belgian defence rested on NATO collective defence structures in the time of the East-West Cold War. They still rest on it in the post-Cold War era, even if there is an insistence that a stronger European security and defence identity would balance the transatlantic relationship within NATO.

While Central Africa has traditionally represented the other predominant foreign policy orientation, it has lost its momentum in the last decade: economic co-operation and technical assistance with Congo, Rwanda and Burundi lost their intensity at the same time as the political ties became strained. The freezing of the relationship with the Mobutu regime and the ethnic civil wars in Rwanda and in Burundi have relaxed the bonds with the former colonies. But the protection of Belgian expatriates living in Central Africa (about 3,000) remains an issue of vital interest. However, the government formed in July 1999

has expressed a strong will to commit again in a Central Africa Belgian policy. A new Belgian African policy seems to be indicated, which would aim at bringing more European support for this area.

Now that the perspective of eastern stability has replaced eastern threat, Belgium considers EU and NATO enlargements as a key issue for European stability. Mediterranean stability and disarmament – namely the ban on chemical weapons, on anti-personnel mines and on nuclear tests – are also important goals for Belgian security policy. Belgian forces participated or are still participating in various UN and NATO peace-keeping missions, namely in Somalia, Rwanda, and former Yugoslavia (Krajna, Bosnia and Kosovo).

With regard to security and defence organisations, NATO remains the appropriate framework for European security. WEU is not to duplicate but to be associated with NATO, by strengthening the European identity and by providing forces for Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) missions. For its part, OSCE is to play a complementary but not a central role in the European architecture. NATO cannot depend on OSCE supervision. The OSCE role is to be focused on preventive diplomacy, the human dimension and crisis management.

Belgian positions vis-à-vis the Northern security aspects of the European Union

Northern Europe as such doesn't seem to be of great salience in the Belgian European policy. To date, the Finnish initiative on the "Northern Dimension" has given rise to very few statements or comments from the Belgian authorities. For the moment it is only approached in the global framework of EU policies. Federal foreign ministry services are wondering whether this aspect would increase in importance in the future. With regard to the

security aspects, the Russia factor and the independence of the Baltic states have been the most significant concerns expressed by Belgian authorities.

The Russia factor

The Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs officially considers Russia as a target country for Belgian bilateral relations. Its immense natural resources, its potential market of 150 million inhabitants and the need for industrial modernisation make Russia an important strategic partner. The current serious political and economic troubles in Russia are a matter of concern for Belgium. The stabilisation of this country is seen as essential for European security. Belgium estimates that the EU has to play a central role in helping Russia to regain internal peace and stability as well as to consolidate its fragile democratic institutions but, for its part, Belgium is also trying to intensify its political and economic bilateral relations. A co-operation Treaty was signed between the two countries in December 1993. It forms a new institutional framework for their relations and offers new possibilities for co-operation. In the implementation of this Treaty, a joint action programme for the years 1999-2000 was signed in December 1998 and will be prolonged in the years to come. It aims at reinforcing the political dialogue and developing their relations in the social, economic, financial and commercial sectors. For its part, the Flemish Region has a cultural agreement with Russia, which is mainly devoted to educational projects.

Despite the Chechnya crisis, Russia is not perceived by Belgian authorities as a threat in the field of security but as a strategic partner of the EU. Hence Belgium supports the common strategy developed by the EU towards Russia. Within NATO, it has spoken for not provoking Russia, insisting that no nuclear weapons would be displayed in the three new Eastern NATO members.

Despite these official declarations, it seems that Belgian interests in Russia are not extremely dynamic and that the policy towards Russia is mainly developed on the supranational level and left in the hands of NATO and the EU.

Belgian views on the Baltic states

"It was a great joy", said the then Belgian Foreign Minister Mark Eyskens, when, in late 1991, the independence of the Baltic states occurred, after the failure of the Moscow coup. "I took care that Belgium would be among the first countries in the world to re-establish diplomatic relations with the three Baltic states."[1] The Belgian government, who never recognised their annexation by the Soviet Union, helped in 1991 with the setting up of the Baltic information offices in Brussels and supported the Baltic people's claims for autonomy and independence. In the early nineties, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia regained their sovereignty. Their independence and, a few years later, the accession of Finland and Sweden to the European Union, drew the attention of the Belgian political and economic elite to the North, and not only to the Soviet Union which had been perceived since the Cold War era as an Eastern superpower with influence extended to Northern Europe.

Nowadays, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium feels very concerned about the existing tensions between Russia and the Baltic states because of the presence of the Russian-speaking community in Estonia and Latvia, and Belgium encourages the progressive integration of the Russian communities into the Estonian and Latvian societies and the recognition of their political rights by the Baltic states. Belgium is also trying to influence the Latvian and Estonian governments through its position in OSCE, of which Estonia, Latvia and Russia are also members. Belgium acknowledges the efforts already made by the two Baltic governments to improve the

situation. With regard to Lithuania, one Belgian preoccupation is the Kaliningrad enclave between Poland and Lithuania. Belgium encourages the development of strong ties between this Russian territory and its neighbours in order to prevent its isolation after the accession of Poland and Lithuania to the EU. Trade and the free movement of people are considered to be especially important in this desire for further integration.

From an economic point of view, it is the Flemish Region which demonstrates within Belgium the biggest interest in co-operating with the Baltic states. This Region's interest is shown by the set of conventional ties it has developed with the Baltic states. Flanders has signed a co-operation agreement with each of them that covers all the policies Flemish authorities are empowered for. A co-operation treaty was signed with Estonia on 4 March 1996. Two working programmes were established for the periods 1997-1999 and 1999-2001 and 15 projects were approved in execution of them. The agreement of co-operation with Latvia was signed on 5 March 1996. An implementation working programme was signed for the years 1998-1999 and renewed in 1999 for the years 1999-2001, which led to twenty projects of collaboration. A co-operation treaty was signed between Flanders and Lithuania on 7 March 1996. Two working programmes were signed in execution of the treaty for the periods 1997-1999 and 2000-2001. In all, 24 projects were approved in execution of these working programmes.

Views on the Nordic members

With regard to the views on the European integration process itself, Belgium presents some important divergences with the Nordic states. This can be explained by historical, cultural and political particularities. Belgium is generally seen as a small and vulnerable country. It has been confronted in the past with the consequences of the policies of its large neighbours. There is a

consensus in Belgium that European integration is the best way to avoid Belgium being dragged into wars and that the EC has brought peace to the continent. Economically, Belgium depends largely on exports and is fully exposed to the process of economic globalisation. In this respect, Europe also means prosperity. These are some of the reasons why Belgium holds probably one of the most pro-European positions in the EU. It is one of the six founding members of the EC and it supports a federalist conception of European integration. The idea of a federal Europe is much less accepted in the Nordic countries, which show a certain preference for an intergovernmental collaboration. The people of the Nordic states are very proud of their own democratic system and 'euroscepticism' remains strong among them. Brussels is often considered too far away and too bureaucratic and doesn't represent their democratic ideals.

Denmark, Sweden and Finland function nevertheless as active and loyal partners in the European decision making process. But for them, the EU must become more democratic, more transparent and more green. These topics are traditionally less essential for West and South Europe. Neutrality has also been a controversial issue for Belgian diplomacy. In the early nineties Belgian Prime Ministers or Foreign Ministers like Dehaene, Tindemans and Eyskens expressed the view that neutrality was incompatible with accession to the EU. The shift of the security core from collective defence tasks to collective security missions has softened this stance.

Recent developments

During the Finnish Presidency, only one explicit statement was issued on the Northern Dimension. It emphasised the role that the regional co-operation in the framework of the Northern Dimension could play – as Benelux did for European

integration. Trans-border co-operation and regional interdependence are seen as a way to strengthen economic dynamism and to enhance political stability. Belgium's main concern is about nuclear safety for which trans-border co-operation is indispensable even if the risks of a nuclear accident extend beyond the limits of the Northern Dimension. Another priority to be developed is that of sustainable development. Belgium considers that the Northern Dimension exercise could prove useful in creating an added value by regrouping dispersed initiatives, particularly in the sectors of energy, transport and telecommunications. Belgium also insisted that, in the implementation of these priorities, the European Commission should play a leading role to co-ordinate the diverse actors that can be settled in the framework of the Northern Dimension.

Global co-operation or "soft security " issues

Despite the absence of a clear-cut Belgian position towards Northern European security as a whole, some bilateral contacts and agreements with Northern countries could develop further and may lead to a more structured policy towards this area. Although they don't refer to the military aspects of security, they may be included as elements of "soft security". It must be underlined that these contacts and agreements are unequally distributed between the different units that form the Belgian Federal State. Indeed, a specific feature of Belgium is shown in the fact that the federalisation of the State has enabled the different sub-national entities to conduct an individual policy towards third countries and to conclude international treaties in matters of their competencies.

On the Federal level, an impressive number of bilateral agreements with the Northern countries have been signed by Belgium. Various matters are included: trade, culture, fiscal systems, scientific co-operation, education, visa and passports,

transport, fisheries, ... Belgium has, in fact, 18 agreements with Denmark (signed between 1876 and 1983), 9 with Finland (signed between 1928 and 1979), 21 with Norway (signed between 1884 and 1996) and 20 with Sweden (signed between 1855 and 1988). Among these, there is a cultural agreement covering all cultural matters. It was signed with Norway in 1948 Denmark in 1957, with Sweden in 1965 and with Finland in 1979. These cultural agreements form the basis for more concrete collaboration.

On the regional level, it is the Flemish Region in particular which shows interest in the Northern European countries. For the Flemish Government, these are partners of increasing importance. Bilaterally, Flanders has developed a rather significant network of relations with them. More so than for the other Belgian regions (Walloon Region and Brussels), commercial relations are important with Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. These Northern countries represent the sixth export market for Flanders. There are also recent co-operation programmes for education, culture, sport, youth, science and research This network of agreements expresses the importance of the economic, cultural and historic ties between the two areas, which share common values and interests. Obvious interest exists in the Flemish political spheres towards the economic potentialities of the Northern countries. Since 1996, the Flemish Government has shown a special interest in the three Baltic states and launched co-operation with them for the modernisation of their harbours.

According to Flemish studies[2], the Baltic Sea region offers attractive opportunities for economic co-operation, principally in the sectors of scientific research and chemical industry activities, which are especially attractive for the Flemish expertise. It is expected that the Baltic Sea region will realize important economic development and that this development could offer interesting opportunities for the Flemish Region. In

this co-operative context, political stability and security are regarded as prerequisites for sustaining these rather recent ties.

For the Walloon Region, the Northern countries don't represent a major interest for external relations. There is very little co-operation. The Walloon Region has more bilateral contacts with Central and Eastern European countries as shown by cultural agreements with Romania, Bulgaria and Poland, and agreements pending with the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Conclusions

Putting aside the fact that Belgium supported the Baltic states' claim for independence and later their candidacy for accession to the EU, and that Belgian Prime Ministers or Foreign Affairs Ministers expressed some concerns about the reluctance of Finland, Sweden and Austria to give up their neutrality when they became members of the EU, the North of the Union hasn't been perceived by Belgium as an area of great importance. Except for its significance with regard to the relationship with post-Soviet Russia, it hasn't received particular attention nor fostered specific considerations or concerns from Belgian authorities. These didn't and don't perceive Northern Europe as a sphere of vital interest for Belgium. That may explain why Belgian diplomacy paid limited attention and committed itself only moderately to the framing of an EU policy on the Northern Dimension.

But this doesn't mean that Northern Europe is deprived of any attention and attractiveness. However, the focus is on economic co-operation and to a lesser extent on cultural matters. In this respect, it is important to stress that the Baltic Sea area appears as a zone of major commitment, especially for the Flemish regional government, while its French-speaking neighbour, the Walloon Region and the French-speaking

Community, devote more attention to Central and Eastern countries like Poland, Romania and Bulgaria.

Notes

[1] Mark Eyskens, *"Buitenlandse Zaken"*, (Lannoo, 1992), p.138.

[2] *Vlaams Buitenlands Beleid : Het Politiek en Strategisch Belang van de Samenwerking met de Noordse Landen*, Prof. dr. Yvan VANDEN BERGHE (promoter), Universitaire Instelling Antwerpen, September 1999.

The Swedish approach: Constructive competition for a common goal

Gunilla Herolf

Introduction

The accession of Finland and Sweden to the European Union was a considerable geopolitical change for the Union. It brought into the EU a very large area in northern Europe and two countries which, in contrast to most other members, are militarily non-aligned. What is more, it brought one close, and one immediate neighbour to Russia into the Union. It is no wonder that this is seen by older members as a great change in terms of security.

For Sweden and Finland, discussing security in a regional perspective, in which the Baltic Sea is at the centre rather than constituting a borderline, is a new experience. The contacts between NATO countries and non-aligned countries on the one hand and Warsaw Pact states on the other were meagre during the Cold War in all areas of politics, trade and human relations, and the area as such did not merit the name of region.

For the Nordic countries, the experience is not as new as it is for the EU, however. Co-operation between the Nordic and Baltic states started soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall and was thus well on its way by the time Sweden and Finland became EU members on 1 January 1995. This co-operation is in many ways an expansion of that which has existed among Nordic countries for many years. The tradition of co-operation among countries belonging to different organisations has thus continued through

the expansion of Nordic co-operation to include the Baltic area and in particular the three Baltic states – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In addition, there is now very broad co-operation in this area on all levels – state, regional and local – and within all spheres of society. Finally, there is also a rapidly growing net of economic co-operation led by private companies.

In Sweden the terms "Northern Dimension" and "northern co-operation" have traditionally been associated with the five Nordic states. Increasingly, however, these terms are used in connection with the ongoing pattern of co-operation within the whole Baltic Sea region, including the Barents Sea area. The Finnish Proposal for a Northern Dimension of the EU, while having received the full endorsement of Swedish politicians, is not particularly well-known among the public at large. Insofar as it is discussed, it is seen as a proposal signifying that the northern part of Europe should attract greater attention from others within the European Union. The government has also expressed a wish that this will lead to a strengthening of the regional organisations in the area.

Swedish perceptions of the Northern Dimension

The Swedish view on the Northern Dimension is generally a very positive one. While there are lingering problems and no guarantees for the future, development has so far exceeded expectations. While this is an area in which Sweden is deeply engaged, it is also one in which it is eager to see other European states contribute, namely as trade partners and supporters in security cooperation and a variety of organisations, each according to its specific capability. Among them the European Union is, however, seen to have a particularly important role, due to the rich spectrum of capabilities within this organisation.

The term "Northern Dimension" is not limited here to the

Finnish initiative to create a northern dimension of the EU, but encompasses the impact which events and developments in northern Europe have on European security in general, and the EU in particular, and the role which various actors inside and outside the EU may play in this region.

The term region requires some specification in this context. The northern part of Europe is certainly seen as constituting a region in the sense of having a dense network of co-operation and many common interests among the neighbouring countries. The Swedish Government has repeatedly emphasised, however, that it cannot be considered as a closed area with particular solutions of its own: European security is indivisible and northern Europe – the Barents region and the Arctic, as well as the Baltic Sea region – is securely tied into a pan-European security structure, also including other European countries and the United States.[1]

The general view in Sweden concurs with that of the government that this is not a closed area. Therefore it is not possible to draw a firm line between those countries which are perceived as relevant and those which are not. However, in the view of the Swedish Government as well as of others, some organisations and countries are considered to be more affected by events and developments in the Baltic area than others. This view is to a large extent also reflected in the existing co-operation.

When it comes to the organisations, there are clear differences in importance. Just like everywhere else in Europe, NATO and the EU are the most important ones. In addition, on the European level, the WEU and the OSCE have their own specific roles.

On a regional level, the CBSS and the BEAC are new organisations relevant for the Baltic area and a complement to the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers. The latter two now often work on a '5+3' level, that is, one that also

includes their Baltic counterparts. The Arctic Council brings together eight Arctic nations which, in addition to the five Nordic ones, include Canada, the United States and Russia.

On the level of individual countries, the littoral states of the Baltic Sea are the ones primarily engaged in co-operation. Other CBSS members, that is, Norway and Iceland, also have considerable interests in this area. Another reflection of the view that this is not a closed security area is the role of the United States in the security of the Baltic Sea region. Furthermore, a number of other European states have demonstrated their interest in the security affairs of the region by participation in various forms of co-operation.

These states participate in co-operation related to the Baltic Sea area in a variety of ways, partly through the organisations mentioned above and partly through various other constellations. The US–Baltic Charter of January 1998 is one, and perhaps the most important, example of transatlantic co-operation. The involvement of a larger group of European countries is illustrated by the fact that the agreements on a Baltic naval unit for peace-promotion duties (BALTRON), the training of a joint Baltic peacekeeping battalion (BALTBAT) and the establishment of an air surveillance system for the three Baltic states (BALTNET) have been signed not only by the Nordic states but also by France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

A common method of co-operation within the Baltic Sea region is through bilateral agreements with individual countries. In particular, co-operation by Denmark, Finland and Sweden with the former Warsaw Pact countries in the Baltic Sea region has a strong bilateral component. The pattern varies somewhat between these agreements, however. While Sweden focuses quite evenly on all three Baltic states, Finland, for example, puts the emphasis on Estonia.[2]

There is also a regional and a local level in co-operation

among the Nordic countries across the Baltic Sea. On the local level, the twinning of cities is a special phenomenon designed to give economic support from one city to another, as well as to spread know-how and nurture cultural contacts on a personal level.[3]

Swedish perceptions of the challenges

Generally, the perception in Sweden is that, in spite of the economic problems in Russia, the Baltic Sea region has the potential to become one of Europe's most dynamic growth regions. This positive view has been confirmed by the development since the end of the Cold War. In stark contrast to the situation in the Balkans there is no acute conflict between any of the states. The apprehensions that were held by many some years ago have thus not been substantiated.

The challenge is to continue this positive trend while avoiding the possible dangers and pitfalls along the way. For this reason a number of projects are being pursued within a wide range of fields and through a large variety of actors. While the bulk of this work is in the civilian field, its implications are also believed to increase security.

The issue of NATO enlargement and the negative Russian attitude towards membership of the alliance by the Baltic states are considered important. The Swedish Government has declared that it sees the principle of each country's right to choose its own security policy direction to be of fundamental importance and that the responsibility to consider security in the whole of Europe does not diminish that right. Generally, however, the government considers relations between the Baltic states and Russia to have made positive progress even though some outstanding issues remain – above all those related to the borders: Russia has not yet signed border treaties with Estonia

and Latvia, and the Russian Parliament has not ratified the border agreement with Lithuania.[4] Another issue is that of the Russian minority in the Baltic states, which has been addressed, for example, by changes in the criteria for Latvian citizenship.

A further set of problems is related to environmental hazards. Nuclear safety is a particular cause for concern because of the serious and trans-boundary character of a possible accident. Together with other regional or local hazards, the environmental deterioration in the Murmansk area is a significant problem.

The challenge associated with the economic differences in the area presents another problem. Russia is of course a particular concern in this respect because of its present economic troubles. The Kaliningrad area, which is now a neighbour to NATO and – more importantly – will in time be an enclave among EU countries, has a vast number of problems: environmental and economic ones as well as those related to drugs and crime. More generally, organised crime is a serious problem which has been dealt with specifically by the CBSS and by bilateral police co-operation.

While the catalogue of problems is rather long, they are seen to be of a nature which does not give rise to any immediate concerns. Furthermore, they are deemed to be addressed by the rich web of co-operation pursued by the various countries and by the local, regional and other organisations mentioned above as well as by private companies. Thus, while requiring attention, they are not considered acute.

Swedish activities

The Swedish policy of co-operation in the Baltic Sea region is partly one of seeking to create stability through the transfer of knowledge and resources to former Warsaw Pact countries. It is also aimed at influencing others to conduct their policy in such a

way as to enhance the security of the countries in the area. One example of the latter is related to the EU enlargement process, which Sweden sees to be of the utmost importance. Sweden also sees the hesitation and the wish to postpone EU enlargement, which prevails among some EU members, to be dangerous. It is believed that this might send the wrong signals to the candidate states and lead to a negative atmosphere and attitude among them.[5]

One way of measuring the Swedish effort is to look at the sums involved: between 1989 and 1998 a total of SEK 8.7 billion (1 billion Euros) was allocated in the Swedish budget to various forms of co-operation with Central and Eastern Europe.

In May 1995 four principal goals for co-operation were laid down by the Swedish Government: to promote common security, to deepen the culture of democracy, to support socially sustainable economic transition and to support environmentally sustainable development. In addition, three particular tasks were given priority in the new co-operation programme of 1997: to help Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland to fulfil the criteria for EU membership, to assist in the further integration of Russia and Ukraine into broader European co-operation, and to step up efforts in the social sector.[6]

A variety of tasks are performed under the heading "promoting common security", an area which accounted for 8 per cent of total Swedish support in 1989–97. Apart from activities pursued within the various organisations, much is done on a bilateral basis: Baltic officers are receiving training at Swedish military colleges; Poland and the Baltic states receive advice on and training in ways in which total defence can be built up under democratic control; Russian officers are trained for civilian occupations, and so on. Training has been given for border and customs control, while border patrol vehicles, radar stations, computers and communications equipment have been supplied. Furthermore, support has been given in matters

related to the flow of refugees that have used the Baltic states as a thoroughfare to Western Europe.

In order to deal with emergency relief measures, new rescue services have been established in the Baltic states. Training has also been given to increase civil aviation safety. Furthermore, in order to clear the land on former military bases, Swedish authorities have provided training in clearing mines and ammunition. They have also chartered safer navigable channels at sea.[7]

Under the heading "deepening the culture of democracy" (12 per cent of total support) aid has been given to the administrative institutions which deal with establishing security for the lives and property of citizens. In addition, language education has been provided for the Russian minorities in Estonia and Latvia, and a Partnership for Culture project has been established. Co-operation for democracy is largely decentralised and is carried out on several levels. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), churches and business groups at local and regional levels are engaged in these efforts, among which the twinning of cities has yielded particularly positive results.[8]

The support of socially sustainable economic transition accounts for the largest share of the total support (57 per cent). Support has been given to Swedish companies that wish to do business and invest in Eastern Europe and to Baltic and Ukrainian companies that seek to increase their exports to Sweden. Help has also been given to risk capital investments in the Baltic commercial banks in order to obtain influence over the banks' activities and ethics and to stabilise credit markets. Furthermore, in several countries the registration of land and real estate has been supported.

Co-operation with Russia has taken the form of co-operation between the finance ministries in the areas of taxation, national debt administration and auditing. The so-called Yeltsin

programme (a result of President Yeltsin's visit to Sweden in December 1997) includes the training in Sweden of young Russian business executives over a period of five years.

As part of the support for a sustainable economic transition, Sweden has also provided social support. In the field of public health several schemes have focused on north-western Russia.[9]

The fourth area, that of supporting environmentally sustainable development, accounts for 23 per cent of the total support. It includes help to remedy damages caused by industrialisation during the Soviet era and aid to avoid their continuation. Sweden is also participating in the international efforts to improve nuclear safety in the area. The focus is on the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania and the Russian nuclear power stations in the St Petersburg area and on the Kola Peninsula. Apart from nuclear reactor safety, Swedish support concerns the handling of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste, safeguarding, i.e. control to prevent the diversion of nuclear materials, and radiation protection.

Under this heading, support has also been given to address the problem of energy supply, focusing on making existing energy plants efficient and profitable.[10]

Sweden within the Northern Dimension

As is evident from the above, Sweden is a very active participant in northern security co-operation. The Swedish way of pursuing co-operation in this area has some specific characteristics which Sweden shares with the other Nordic countries. One of these is the strong emphasis on bilateral co-operation. In this bilateralism there is also a degree of competition among the Nordic states regarding which is the most active. This factor has been called "constructive competition" as an indication that such competition has some advantages for the beneficiaries.

Another characteristic is the bottom-up approach, namely the strong emphasis on low-level co-operation and the belief that the stability of a society is built from below.

Furthermore, Swedish policy, like those of its closest co-operation partners, Denmark and Finland, is based more on a functional view than on loyalty towards a particular organisation. The general view in Sweden is that the most fruitful path to increased security is through co-operation among several organisations. Thus, in a joint article, the Swedish and Finnish foreign ministers state their support of an increased EU-WEU capability to handle crises and also their belief that advantage must be taken of existing capabilities within NATO so as not to duplicate efforts.[11]

When Sweden addresses the issues relevant for co-operation within the Baltic Sea area the effort is seen more as one of building stability than of dealing with problems. This is reflected in the fact that much co-operation is not related to specific problems It also reflects the perception that the measures taken have some synergistic effects. For example, while crime has to be fought with means which address the specific problem, the pursuance of measures aimed at raising the standard of living are believed to be likely to have an effect on the level of crime too. In addition, on a more general level, all civilian efforts are seen to have an influence on raising security as well. Of course there is still a need to list priorities. The situation in Russia, in particular, means that some hard choices must be made.

The character of co-operation mirrors the complex pattern of related issues. On some issues, the existing co-operation may be perceived as indicative of subregionalisation, but the great number of links to larger organisations and to countries outside the region contribute to make this an open region. In addition, the on-going co-operation may be seen as characterised by a division of work in the sense that Nordic countries are dominant and that the other countries which demonstrate an interest in

the area are primarily the major ones – France, Germany and the United Kingdom. This pattern is not quite consistent, however. For example, Italy and Hungary have more trade with Poland than Sweden does.[12] Furthermore, the engagement of the Nordic countries is not limited to Northern Europe: for example, all have participated in the efforts to create peace in former Yugoslavia.

The security of the whole Nordic area is vital to Sweden. By seeking to increase security in its neighbourhood, Sweden is at the same time increasing its own security. At the same time, membership of the European Union has brought the problems of other areas closer and this has led to active participation in the EU's Mediterranean co-operation, for example. Sweden has also been engaged in the problems of former Yugoslavia, although this preceded EU membership. Swedish troops were sent to the former Yugoslavia as part of the first peacekeeping mission, the UNPROFOR, reaching a peak of around 1,400 soldiers during 1994-1995, and a very large number of asylum seekers from former Yugoslavia have been admitted to Sweden. There has also been a longstanding interest in the Third World and in the activities of the United Nations generally. Sweden is among the major contributors to the United Nations, even when measured in absolute terms.

The views of EU members on European matters are naturally characterised by both common and diverging assessments. The general goals are believed to be shared by all, whereas the means for achieving them are not. Insofar as money is involved, there is an element of competition between southern and northern interests which will naturally be reflected in views on how to deal with problems. The Swedish belief in the early introduction of a free trade area around the Mediterranean Sea, for example, is not shared by all countries in that area.

Russia as an actor

Russia has traditionally played an important role in Swedish security deliberations. During the Cold War years, the Soviet Union constituted the only conceivable state which might harbour hostile intentions towards Sweden, and Swedish military forces were therefore focused on defence against this country. Russia today is perceived as having neither the intention nor the capability for a major attack against Sweden. Still, however, Swedes perceive Russia as an important country for themselves and for Europe. Above all, Russia's role is seen as determined by the fact that it is a vast country with a very large population. This means that Russia cannot take part in European or Nordic co-operation on the same terms as other countries.

At the same time, Russia is a poor country, which means that it is on the receiving end in co-operation agreements. In addition, it is a country which is in such deep trouble that the possible implications of a total breakdown of the state infrastructure must be considered.

Russia is not a forceful actor within the Northern Dimension in the sense of taking initiatives or pursuing co-operation on its own initiative. Some exceptions to this have been noted, however. One of them is the proposal launched in autumn 1997 for a regional security agreement in the Baltic Sea region, in which Russia would have some kind of guarantor role. The proposal was dismissed. This initiative is, however, a reminder of the superpower status which Russia/the USSR once had and the problems for Russia to adjust to a new status and a new role. The size of Russia – combined with the apprehensions that still exist about this country – has led to a perceived need for an involvement in the area of the only counterweight possible, the United States.

At the same time, it is considered important among Swedes that Russia also be involved in positive co-operation. Sweden

has therefore sought to achieve Russian participation in as many co-operation schemes as possible. A particular goal is to achieve Russian participation in PfP exercises. An important general aim of the co-operation with Russia is to avoid distrust and the creation of a sharp economic dividing line between Russia and its neighbours, most of whom are now gradually integrating into the EU.

The EU dimension

The Swedish view is that the EU has a very important role to play in the developments in northern Europe. While the absence of acute problems means that the northern area is not a subject for EU crisis management, the efforts to ensure long-term stability are seen to be no less crucial.

The EU is furthermore believed to be at a very strong advantage in comparison with other organisations because of its civilian and integration-building character and the importance of economic progress for the former Warsaw Pact countries. It is also a valuable member of the CBSS and the BEAC because of the kind of long-term development in the area of stability creation which is sought through the work of these organisations.

The Swedish view is that the EU should give high priority to the region. There is much to be gained from supporting the positive developments made so far, and it is much more costly to deal with frustration from those who consider that they have not been fairly treated in the enlargement process. Since Baltic Sea co-operation in general, including EU involvement, is widely endorsed in Sweden there is very little national debate on these issues. The national spectrum of opinions is actually rather narrow and the discussion tends to focus on the need to do more.

The most important way in which the EU can play a role is

believed to be through its enlargement procedure. The enlargement is seen by the government as "the single most significant building stone in a genuine, all-embracing European security order. It contributes to increased security, deepened democracy and social and economic development in our immediate vicinity, and also throughout Europe".[13] This positive view on EU enlargement is shared by the Swedish public.

In the Commission´s Agenda 2000, presented in July 1997, only Estonia out of the three Baltic states was included in the first round of enlargement. In Sweden, the fact that the EU took the step of including one Baltic country was deemed to be of great significance, bringing into the Union a country which was formerly part of the Soviet Union. While involving no security guarantees, it was nevertheless seen to give added security to this country through its integration with Western Europe. Sweden and Denmark, considering it just as important that Latvia and Lithuania were able to start negotiations soon, have acted on their behalf. The fact that negotiations are now also being started with these two countries is seen as a very positive development for security and stability in the region.

In the continued process of enlargement, the Swedish view is also that there is a risk that the countries in the present round of enlargement are given too hard terms in order to fulfil EU requirements, which would be unfair. There might be disagreement about this between countries like Sweden, which see EU enlargement as essential, and those EU countries which consider enlargement to be less necessary.

The other important task for the EU is seen to be within the area of the CFSP. The EU is regarded as uniquely equipped to play a central role in this area since its political authority and economic strength are combined with a broad spectrum of instruments that can be used to prevent conflicts. A Swedish proposal for the civilian part of crisis management was launched in the autumn of 1999 but was watered down in the negotiations

and has now been launched again in cooperation with the United Kingdom.[14] The military part is also seen as an important section of the spectrum for Sweden, which has been heavily engaged in peacekeeping for decades. This policy is supported by the Government and the general public. In an opinion poll in 1999, the decision to continue sending troops to former Yugoslavia, even if they might become involved in direct fighting, was supported by 74 per cent of those questioned (18 per cent were negative and eight per cent were undecided).[15] In the government's view, Europe must take greater responsibility for its own peace and security. This Finnish-Swedish 1996 initiative of integrating the Petersberg Tasks into the EU is considered by the government as having created an institutional basis to which also political will, effective military capability and efficient decision-making procedures will have to be added.[16] The first concrete result of this is the de-mining mission in Croatia in which Sweden is the leading nation. The decisions of Cologne, as well as those of Helsinki, have been seen as positive and important since they are considered to be contributing to the efficiency of crisis management. The EU-WEU should thus be involved in crisis-management but cannot constitute any kind of counterweight to Russia. Such a role is believed to be possible only for NATO and/or the United States.

As regards Russia, the Swedish opinion is that the policy towards this country should be of a very high priority. In an article by the Swedish Prime Minister, Russia is listed first among issues that need more attention by the Union. Russia is seen as needing extensive support in order to fight economic problems, organised crime and political instability, which all threaten democratic development.[17] However, the Russian influence should not be allowed to surpass that of any other state, and thus Russia should not be allowed to exercise any kind of veto rights in organisations to which it does not belong.

Perceptions of the northern countries

Sweden's two neighbours, Denmark and Finland, are its closest co-operation partners in the work pursued in the Baltic Sea region. This is a kind of co-operation in which like-mindedness is a strong factor of cohesion among them. Thus, the fact that Denmark is a member of NATO is not seen as a factor that makes it very different from the other countries in this co-operation.

The Swedish view is that the currently crucial issues are not related to threats such as those defined in the WEU's and NATO's Article 5, signifying support in the event of a military attack on a member country. Therefore, it does not see the development of the CFSP in terms of creating security to be in any way hampered by the non-aligned countries. The Finnish–Swedish initiative of 1996 has rather been seen as a way to increase the capabilities of the CFSP. As described above, what is actually seen as lacking is co-ordinated capability and political will. In terms of institutional development, however, the non-aligned countries can be seen as an impediment to a situation in which all countries belong to the same organisations.

There is an abundance of needs which have to be addressed in the Baltic Sea region as elsewhere. While these are technically outside the CFSP area, as described above, the Swedish view is that the work which is carried out primarily by the Nordic countries in other areas is directly connected to security. Thus the impact of successfully addressing problems such as border and minority issues, not to mention supporting economic integration and the build-up of democracy, is to improve security in a very forceful way.

The way in which developments within the Baltic Sea region will affect the role of the EU depends on the way in which the EU continues to pursue co-operation in this area. The Baltic Sea region has some problems, but compared to other areas these are not perceived in the North as being particularly acute. The

Russian problem is certainly serious, but is not a Baltic Sea problem but rather a European or a global one. The most likely development is that the EU's role in the area is strengthened because of the importance of its work. It is obvious that the economic integration which the EU provides is highly relevant when addressing the issue of long-term stability which is at stake in the Baltic Sea area. Furthermore, the EU has served as a very valuable partner for NATO through its enlargement, which creates a link between a Baltic country and the West. By doing this, the EU may be said to have mitigated the effects of a NATO enlargement currently not including the Baltic states.

Further strategies

If Sweden and other Nordic countries want to put the Baltic Sea region higher on the list of European Union priorities, they have to make it clear to other countries why they also should give a higher priority to the region.

By and large, it is useful to increase the general level of knowledge about this area to enable a better discussion of its problems and possibilities. The Swedish and other governments involved in co-operation in the Baltic Sea region should therefore adopt a strategy of spreading more information throughout Western Europe about the situation within the former Warsaw Pact countries concerned. Others cannot be expected to be well informed, considering that some of these states are very small and that the development has been very rapid.

Another reason behind raising awareness of countries in the Baltic Sea region should be to seek new investors and trade partners for the former Warsaw Pact countries in the area. This might be achieved by a strategy that includes information campaigns in relevant countries, spreading information about

the progress made since the fall of the Berlin Wall. One of the conclusions of a recent official Swedish report showed that, when it comes to economic developments, the picture that has sometimes emerged is characterised by an underestimation of the progress made and an exaggeration of the problems that exist. An example of the very positive economic development is the growth of gross national product – 11 per cent for Estonia and 5 per cent for Latvia and Lithuania in 1997.[18]

The future position of the Baltic Sea region on the EU map will depend on many factors, not least developments in other corners of Europe. Developments in Russia are a particular problem in the region and their future direction is uncertain. While a serious deterioration of Russian society would be a global issue, a muddling through by this society would still be a matter for European concern and would have some regional implications for the Baltic Sea area. Therefore, all EU countries should now join forces in implementing the agreed EU strategy in order to help Russia get to grips with its present problems. To a large extent, the fate of Russia is also likely to determine the future for the rest of Europe.

Notes

1 See, for example, Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on *Foreign Affairs*, Wednesday 9 February 2000.

2 The distribution of the total Swedish support to Central and Eastern Europe in 1989–97 is as follows: Regional: 15%, Estonia: 14%, Latvia: 17%, Lithuania: 19%, Poland 14%, Russia: 15%, Ukraine: 2% and others: 4%. See E. Hedborg in co-operation with the Central and Eastern Europe Department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Industry and Trade, *A Good Neighbourhood. Sweden's Co-operation with Central and Eastern Europe*, May 1998, (Stockholm: Norstedts Tryckeri AB), p. 9.

3 Three out of four municipalities are engaged in some kind of decentralised cooperation with eastern Europe. See Regeringens

skrivelse 1999/2000:7. Ekonomisk utveckling och samarbete i Östersjöregionen, [Government Writ. Economic Development and Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region.], 30 Sep. 1999, p.55

4 See Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on *Foreign Affairs*, Wednesday 10 February 1999.

5 Sweden in Europe, Address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Anna Lindh, at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, Stockholm, 16 Dec. 1998. See also Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on *Foreign Affairs*, Wednesday 9 February 2000.

6 Developing Co-operation between Neighbouring Countries, Government Bill 1997/98:70

7 See E Hedborg in co-operation with the Central and Eastern Europe Department of Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Industry and Trade, *A Good Neighbourhood. Sweden's Co-operation with Central and Eastern Europe*, May 1998, (Stockholm: Norstedts Tryckeri AB), pp. 16-20 and 31.

8 Ibid. pp. 20-24, 31.

9 Ibid. pp. 24-28, 31.

10 Ibid. pp. 28-31.

11 See "EU and European Crisis Management" *Dagens Nyheter* and *Helsingin Sanomat* 5 Dec. 1998.

12 Ta vara på möjligheterna i Östersjöregionen [Making Use of the Opportunities in the Baltic Region], Betänkande av Östersjöhandelskommittén, SOU, 1998:53, Stockholm, 1998.

13 *Sweden in Europe*, Address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Anna Lindh, at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, Stockholm 16 Dec. 1998.

14 See *Ds 1999:25*, Att förebygga väpnade konflikter [Preventing violent conflicts. A Swedish Action Plan 1999], Göteborgsposten 8 Feb, 1999.

15 Stütz, G. *Opinion 99. Svenskarnas syn på samhället, säkerhetspolitiken och försvaret hösten 1999, Styrelsen för psykologiskt försvar* [The Swedes´ view on society, security policy and defence,The National Board of Psychological Defence], 1999, p. 55.

16 *Sweden in Europe*, Address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Anna Lindh, at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, Stockholm, 16 Dec. 1998.

17 See *Dagens Nyheter*, 13 Dec. 1998 and Ryssland – en del av Europa. Svenska förslag till en EU-politik för samarbetet med Ryssland, Regeringskansliet [Russia – A Part of Europe. Swedish Proposals

for an EU Policy for the Cooperation with Russia, The Cabinet Office,] April 1999

18 Ta vara på möjligheterna i Östersjöregionen [Making Use of the Opportunities in the Baltic Region], Betänkande av Östersjöhandelskommittén, *SOU 1998:53*, Stockholm, 1998.

Danish hopes: From a fuzzy concept to a model case*

Bertel Heurlin

Introductory remarks

The sea changes which took place in northern Europe after the end of the Cold War were fundamental for the Danish security policy. Denmark moved from a frontline position to a centre position in European politics. In addition, the military threat disappeared.[1] As a direct consequence of the post-Cold War Europe the content of the concept of "Norden", the North, primarily referring to five Nordic countries, was transformed in a dramatic way. With Europe as a new unified mega-region, with Finland and Sweden as members of the European Union, and with Norway and Iceland as close EU-associates and in many ways de facto members of the Union, the concept of *Norde*n was no longer in contradiction to "Europe". To *Norden,* Europe was not "otherness". On the contrary – Norden and the expanded Norden, the northern part of Europe, northern Europe, became – as the term indicates – an integrated part of Europe, a Europe more and more influenced by, and integrated into, the European Union. Norden is enlarging, and in the new geopolitical context it is appropriate to refer to the existence of a Northern Dimension of Europe (and of the European Union) and not to "Norden" as a separate part of Europe.[2]

This enlarged *Norden* covers the Baltic Sea area, and the northern part of Europe, including the north-western part of Russia. In very few years this new subregion has adapted to the requirement and the possibilities of the New European Order and is now considered an area with increasing coherence.[3] This

* I am indebetd to M. A. Christian Sparrewohn for his basic research and early drafts for this chapter.

is demonstrated in many ways, not least organisationally. The Baltic Sea area and the northern part of Europe are among the regions in the world with the highest number of cooperative international and transnational organisations, and probably hold the number one position.[4] The organisations cover practically all sectors and all levels. There are political, economic, military, societal, technical, and cultural organisations and networks, representing high as well as low politics, soft as well as hard security issues. They embody political summits on the highest level, organisations between cities in the area, and cooperative cultural arrangements among choirs.

Why is this so? As indicated above we have to look for broader, structural reasons. We may state that we have to work with entirely new geo-political realities in comparison to the Cold War period. During the Cold War, dimensions of geographical distance, neighbourhood, and vicinity between the individual countries had rather low priority. The more or less impenetrable iron curtain was a physical and political fact, which contributed to a simplistic, bipolar geopolitical identity: East-West. Due to the strange mixture in northern Europe of allied countries (NATO and the Warsaw Pact), neutral countries (West as well as East-oriented), and the heavy presence of one of the superpowers, the USSR, there were constant political attempts to blur the existence of an iron curtain in northern Europe. For example: the Soviet Union called for a Baltic Sea of Peace and the Nordic countries for a "Nordic low-tension-area". Nevertheless, the division of Europe played a decisive role also in this area.[5]

But, this coherent geopolitical region is characterised by a specific feature: there are no natural centres, no natural dominating country or unit in the region itself. There are, however, two centres positioned outside the region namely in economic-political terms: Brussels (the European Union) and in security-policy terms: Washington (the United States as the

undisputed leader of NATO). The basic fact is that after the Cold War, northern Europe including the Baltic Sea area has been "EU-ised" (including Russia with the EU-Russia partnership agreement) and at the same time "NATO-ised" (including Russia with the NATO-Russia Council (JPC, Joint Permanent Council), while the neutral and Baltic countries are all members of PfP and EAPC. Moscow is no longer a centre for northern Europe. Moscow is considered the periphery, in the long run propelled in the direction of the EU and NATO. In order to fully understand the concept of the Northern Dimension, it may be relevant to pose a question: Who creates and dissolves regions? Region building and region fragmentation is closely linked to geographical and cultural factors. But, as is demonstrated in the present case of northern Europe (incl. the Baltic Sea area) these factors are necessary but not sufficient preconditions. Region building is dependent on the dominant organisation of the world. With the disappearance of bipolarity and the transformation to a new international structure with one superpower – a situation which could be labelled unipolarity – Europe, for example, has evolved into one super-region, a Europe that was formerly divided into two regions. This can simply be expressed in the claim that the US is now a European power and not as before a Western European Power. The preconditions for "a Europe whole and free" seem to be an all-European US-"overlay". Equally, the new US role in Europe has now resulted in a Europe divided into three sub-regions: a southern Europe attached to the Mediterranean area, a northern Europe attached to the Baltic sea including the Northern Atlantic – and thirdly: the new coherent middle belt, from France, through Germany, Poland, and Ukraine to Russia.[6]

In this connection it is worthwhile emphasising that the United States seems more engaged in northern Europe than ever before in history. The US is a very active observer in practically all regional political organisations and has established valuable

organisational frameworks like the US-Baltic charter, and the American Northeastern European Initiative. So in this way, the United States is not only a European power but also a marked Northern European power.[7]

This new region building is one of the important factors in the concept of the Northern Dimension. Also, it plays a critical role in the development of the general Danish foreign policy. But how may the general Danish attitude towards the Northern Dimension be characterised in a broader perspective?

Danish perceptions of the Northern Dimension

The general view is that the values behind and content of the original Finnish concept of the Northern Dimension are all shared by Denmark, which has been advocating and implementing many of the same ideas in different fora. Yet the term "Northern Dimension" is still absent from the Danish national debate on the European Union as well as the discourse on Baltic Sea involvement. While both of these areas are discussed and handled by a broad range of political, economic, and societal actors, the link between them is rarely mentioned outside the circles of policy-makers and social scientists. Few Danes have heard of the Northern Dimension; the phrase has not surfaced in the general political debate yet, a fact that can be explained partly by the original broad and somewhat abstract nature of the Finnish proposal which made it difficult to evaluate and discuss. The lack of concrete substance is not the whole story, however. Just as much of an obstacle to general awareness of the concept is the fact that Danish authorities, companies, and individuals are already involved in the region in a vast range of bilateral and multilateral initiatives appearing to cover the same areas of co-operation and development as the Northern Dimension. To many, it is simply not clear what

innovation the concept provides. In isolation, the Northern Dimension concept can be seen as a Finnish agenda-setting strategy with the aim of placing the specific Finnish geopolitical position in a broader European context, avoiding, however, an emergence of what could be perceived as a coordinated Nordic-centric policy inside the EU. The fact that the Northern Dimension has now become part of the general EU policy is an indication of wise, clever, and well-planned, long-term Finnish policy.[8] On a more official level, the Danish foreign service sees great opportunities in an increased emphasis on the Northern Dimension in the European Union, especially if it builds on existing structures and expertise in the region. If the EU could assume a coordinating role of the many national and institutional policies already being implemented, it might well improve the efficiency of the efforts and thereby strengthen the security and prosperity of northern Europe. Additionally, a more active role by the EU could mean the successful undertaking of cooperative projects that the current institutions active in the region are too weak to handle alone and would result in increased recognition by the southern member countries of the importance of the region. Further, it could function as a strategic bargaining chip in the general, broad EU-policy game, *vis-à-vis* the Barcelona process which deals with the Mediterranean dimension of the EU.[9]

Danish activities

A new activism emerged in Danish foreign policy with the end of the Cold War. During an international shift in security focus from hard to soft, Denmark found that its capabilities matched the new challenges much better than the old. A new policy – active internationalism – was proclaimed in April 1989 by the Foreign Minister, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen.[12] A Government

Commission had examined and redefined the Danish Foreign Service to match the new international situation.[13] The recommendations were that Denmark should be more proactive, focus more on international globalisation and base its foreign policy on a longer-term strategic perspective. This broke with a tradition of muted Danish diplomacy that had been shaped by the Danish military defeats in the 19th century and been emphasised after the Second World War. Danish geopolitical vulnerability, serving as a barrier for proactivism, disappeared when the Berlin Wall was torn down, indicating the end of bipolarity. Denmark's re-establishment of diplomatic relations, as one of the first Western countries with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in 1991, marked a substantial change and implied the beginning of a unique position for the Baltic countries in Danish foreign policy.[14] Bilaterally and through the regional organisations (those already existing and the many that were created), Denmark took a great responsibility upon itself in order to assist the former Eastern Bloc countries in general and the three Baltic countries in particular. With the aim of helping these countries to achieve integration and security in Europe in political, economic, societal, and military terms, Denmark participated in a vast range of initiatives.

Bilaterally, the new internationalism has led to a multitude of projects. On the most local level, the National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark has reported a rapid growth in the number of "friendship city" partnerships between Danish cities and countries near the Baltic Sea. Additionally, a significant number of Danish cities are involved in projects in the former Soviet Union in sectors such as energy, environment, and education. In the period 1992-1996, Danish counties were involved in 140 projects in the former Soviet Union and Poland mainly within the areas of education, administration, and social services. The local levels have spearheaded a substantial Danish social systems export to these countries.[15]

On a larger scale, the central levels of the Danish political system are involved in numerous initiatives. Denmark was among the first countries in Europe to initiate defence cooperation with the Central and Eastern European countries, and was one of the driving forces behind the creation of BALTBAT, a peacekeeping unit with soldiers from the three Baltic countries, trained and equipped by a number of western European states. Denmark has also assisted the Baltic countries in upgrading their defence for Partnership for Peace and eventual NATO membership. With Germany and Poland, Denmark formulated a tripartite agreement in 1995 aiming at preparing the Polish forces for NATO. A German/Polish/Danish multinational NATO corps will be established in 1999, each country contributing one division. The Baltic Sea divisions of the three countries are involved in close cooperation and joint military training. Additionally, Denmark has supported the establishment of BALTRON (a common naval force) and BALTNET (a common air surveillance system). Furthermore, the Royal Danish Army and Navy Academies train several Baltic cadets each year, and are one of driving forces behind the Baltic Defence College (BALTDEFCOL) in Tartu, which has a Danish chief. Denmark is currently involved in approximately 250 distinct defence projects in the Baltic Sea Area.[16]

On softer security issues, Denmark has been similarly active in aiding and guiding the Central and Eastern European countries. The list of projects is quite overwhelming and includes police cooperation, the export of the Danish taxation system to Poland and the Baltic countries, substantial aid to ease the Former Soviet Republics' pollution problems, the initiating of academic networks to exchange scholars and students (the so-called "Eurofaculty"), agricultural assistance to upgrade the methods and technology in the Baltic countries, the opening of a cultural institute in Riga, extensive education of Baltic and Russian teachers on all levels, and economic aid to bolster the

democratic efforts of the new political systems. The Kaliningrad area has been selected as a specific priority. Intensive efforts are being conducted to establish a Danish-Russian action plan for the area. Denmark is the bilateral donor that contributes the most to the Baltic countries both in absolute and relative terms. To this should be added all the efforts to establish trade connections between Denmark and the new markets. These include government initiatives to strengthen the commercial sectors of the Baltic Sea countries as well as the expansions of private Danish companies that are attracted by an inexpensive labour force and the need for western know-how. A growing part of the Danish foreign trade is with Poland, Russia and the Baltic countries.[17]

Multilaterally, Denmark has played an active role in the large number of regional organisations existing in the Northern and Baltic regions. A high-water mark for Danish involvement came in 1997-1998 when Denmark chaired the CBSS. The CBSS was founded upon Danish and German initiative in 1992 and has become one of the leading exponents for economic, political and cultural cooperation in the region. On the local level, Danish cities are active in the Union of Baltic Cities, Danish counties in The Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Cooperation, and the Danish island Bornholm in the Baltic Sea Islands, modestly abbreviated to B-7. To this should be added the Baltic Ring (a vision on a common energy and electricity network), HELCOM (the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission), the Baltic Sea Alliance, as well as the older organisations of the Nordic Council and the institutions related to the Barents Cooperation that have all redefined their roles to initiate dialogue with Russia. Additionally, Denmark has worked actively in the EU and NATO to prepare both organisations and applicants for expansion and has invited Baltic soldiers to participate fully and integrally in Danish contributions to UN peacekeeping operations. Denmark was the first country to extend such an invitation.[18]

The list of Danish initiatives and affiliations in the region covered by "the Nordic Dimension" provides an impression of the intensity of existing efforts, as well as the multilateral policy channels already in place. A very tight institutional network that appears to cover even the broadest definition of security and development is established. Danish mass media has produced a general awareness of the work already taking place in the region, as well as of the official Danish political ambitions regarding the active involvement of the Baltic countries in the western organisations. Seen against this background, it is not surprising that the Finnish initiative has difficulties in gaining ground in the general Danish debate. Though most Danish politicians and participants in the public debate support all the values behind and the content of the Finnish proposal, they are approaching a point of saturation and do not necessarily see anything new or different about the "Northern Dimension". This will be a key challenge to the concept in Denmark and probably elsewhere in the region. It will have to present itself as truly unique in order to receive much attention in the public debate. So far, it has not succeeded in doing so. Before outlining the specific Danish position on the Northern Dimension, a brief general survey on Danish Security policy in terms of Russia, "Norden", and the Baltic Sea Area will be presented.

Danish security policy in the Baltic Sea region: Russia

The Northern Dimension is not least about Russia. Denmark, as the spokesperson for the Baltic states at least concerning NATO membership, has on the one hand been the advocate of a quite demanding line with regard to Russia and, on the other hand, pursued a friendship and cooperation-seeking policy.

Denmark does not perceive Russia as a security threat, at least not in the short run. The recent National Danish Defence

Commission has stated in its report from 1998 that there will be no direct conventional military threat to Denmark in the next 10 years.[19] Likewise it can be observed that Russia is reducing its military capabilities in the north-western part of the country by approximately 50%. The Danish perception of her relations to Russia is best described as a partnership, though a partnership that sometimes has to be treated with caution. This caution is not due to fear of aggression towards Denmark, its allies, or the Baltic states for that matter. Denmark's main objective is to prevent the relations between Russia and the West from deteriorating or, in the worst case, returning to the Cold War climate. This means that the Danish security risks with regard to Russia have to be seen in a longer perspective. The perceived risk is instability not aggression.[20]

The logic behind Danish policy with regard to Russia is that by giving her a role and a say in the international community and helping her become stable domestically, the perspectives for friendly, open, and reliable relations are better.

This implies that Denmark on the one hand pursues a stabilisation of the relationship with Russia. On the other hand, Denmark would not go too far in compromising her principles in order to uphold the good climate. Examples are the Danish activist stand on the Baltic question, the enlargement of NATO, and the Kosovo conflict.

Danish security policy is characterised by an active, influence-seeking and sometimes quite self-assured position. This goes not least for relations with Russia. This position is partly explained by Denmark's role in the context of NATO. In this forum, Denmark has changed its position from being a – sometimes quite obstinate – free rider in the 1980s to being an active participant with a cooperative policy, always quite in line with the American opinion of the 1990s. This means that NATO first of all takes care of security in the Baltic Sea area according to the Danish general point of view. The population also supports

this policy. While during the Cold War often less than half the population were supportive of NATO, now – when no military threat exists – up to 80% are strongly for continued membership. This attitude did not change during the NATO war in Kosovo when Denmark was heavily engaged, participating with almost as many fighter planes as Germany.[21]

Russia is a natural part of the northern European subregion and it is important to include her in the cooperative process and in the political dialogue. Russia is generally assessed by the Danish authorities as a pivotal actor in the region, and a country of simultaneously great opportunities and some concern. The aim is to facilitate the Russian involvement in Europe. The European Union is an important tool, but regional arrangements in northern Europe and bilateral relations are also considered crucial. As far as Denmark is concerned, EU enlargement as well as NATO enlargement – not least to the Baltic countries – are assigned high priority.[22] In practical terms, Denmark has widened its cooperation with Russia. Although many relations with Russia are conducted multilaterally, as part of the international, regional and subregional organisations and institutions, Denmark has a specific interest in direct bilateral connections and relations. These are demonstrated in practically all areas – economically, politically, militarily, and technologically.

Historically, Denmark and Russia have a long-term record of friendly relations. The two countries have never been at war with each other. Even during the Cold War, Denmark conducted a non-provocation policy *vis-à-vis* the then Soviet Union due to its specific geopolitical position as a frontline state as well as its participation in the so-called "Nordic Balance".[23] The Nordic Balance was a political concept indicating a balance between the three Nordic NATO members, Iceland, Denmark and Norway – all having restrictive NATO policies – and the two neutral countries Sweden and Finland. Balancing actions were expected

as a reaction to superpower pressure on one of the two Nordic groupings – for example Soviet pressure towards Finland or US pressure towards Denmark or Norway. After the end of the Cold War Denmark found itself in a fundamental new geopolitical position. The Baltic Sea looked completely different. Denmark was no longer considered the "cork" of the Baltic Sea – with the GDR absorbed in the FRG, Poland regaining her full sovereignty, the three Baltic republics becoming independent states again, and with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, due to the establishment of a Russia, a political act directed against the Soviet Union with the aim of creating a new unit, partly as an Anti-Soviet Union based in principle on market economy, democracy, human rights and personal freedom.

Denmark's policy *vis-à-vis* Russia has followed two lines: on the one hand a policy of close partnership, economically, politically and militarily, and on the other a policy which demonstrates a specific interest in maintaining and securing the full independence of the Baltic states. More than any other country, Denmark has emphasised the process of including the Baltic states in NATO.

Economically, the basic point of departure is the Danish-Russian agreement of 1992 on the development of economic, industrial, scientific and technological cooperation. A Danish-Russian government council is the operative organ also responsible for opening up matters for further broad cooperation. The trade relations are relatively modest. Russia is Denmark's 20th largest export market, and number two among the Central and Eastern European countries after Poland. Traditionally, Denmark has a surplus in the Danish-Russian trade balance. The Danish investments are also modest.[24] Besides trade, aid is a factor. In the last 10 years Denmark has supported Russia with more than one million krones. Two thirds of the aid has been earmarked for the areas bordering the Baltic Sea. The main targets for aid are environment, support for the

economic reform process, education and the social area.

Militarily, the cooperation covers conversion, and support for former Russian officers from the Baltic countries. The direct military relations are based upon an agreement between the two ministries of defence from 1994. Among the main aims is support for civil and democratic control with the Russian armed forces. The cooperation is forged in annual programmes, including mutual visits, debates, common experiences with training and education, and joint exercises.

Due to the Kosovo crisis some common Danish-Russian activities have been discontinued. Denmark has emphasised the partnership relations to Russia in general and the relations to the Danish "Near Abroard", i.e. areas bordering the Baltic Sea, in particular. Denmark will in the future give a high priority to the Kaliningrad area. Generally it is concluded that the EU-Northern Dimension can be a stepping stone for further Danish engagement in the north-western part of Russia.

The EU dimension

In the basic Danish conception, the EU dimension in the northern Europe subregion is of increasing importance. As *Norden* is playing less of a role, due to the transformations following the end of the Cold War, and as the new subregion of northern Europe is constructed along the lines of a strong and expanding EU and an increasing role of the United States as the sole superpower and the indisputable leader of the likewise expanding NATO, the EU as a structural and organising part of daily political life does have a considerable impact on Danish policy. Generally it must be stated that Denmark welcomes EU participation.

Thus Denmark perceives the northern subregion as important in the EU context. Placed in the middle of the

subregion, many Danish security concerns are located here, not least in the realm of soft security: energy policy, cultural policy, environmental policy, problems concerning international crime, refugees, human rights, the stability of nuclear power plants, social policy, and judicial problems. As for hard security, Denmark has – not least due to its four EU-policy opt-outs, which include EU-defence – emphasised the NATO solution.[25] The Helsinki decisions of December 1999, which include the establishing of a European intervention force of 60,000 soldiers in 2003, will certainly challenge Denmark and confront it with the threat of marginalisation in important parts of EU policy. A main aim of Danish policy – also with regard to the Northern Subregion – is precisely to avoid or minimise marginalisation.

Denmark welcomes the EU initiatives of closer relations to Russia and has been actively involved in the process, which established the EU common strategy for Russia as the very first common strategy according to the enhanced CFSP of the Amsterdam Treaty. It is also considered on a par with the EU Northern Dimension policy. In addition, Denmark welcomes the relatively positive Russian answer to the EU common strategy.

The EU is already involved in the subregion in many ways, e.g. through its seat in the CBSS and the BEAC. It is the Danish understanding that the EU involvement should have a fairly high priority. The substance of the EU policy should deal with enlargement. It was Danish policy that all the Baltic countries should be invited to negotiate on the same level as Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. This policy eventually became EU policy in Helsinki in December 1999. But it will only be possible to include all the Baltic states as members in the near future if they are able to make the necessary changes themselves, including securing minority rights.

The Nordic countries

As indicated, the new northern subregion has a significant impact upon the relations between the Nordic countries. Fundamentally it seems evident that with the new and richly-faceted international and regional challenges it should pay for the small Nordic countries to unite their limited resources on issue areas where common interests could be identified. The problem is, firstly, that the common interests are limited, secondly, that the individual Nordic countries increasingly tend to give priority to cooperation with non-Nordic countries in matters of common interest, and thirdly and finally that the individual Nordic countries after the Cold War have tended to emphasise relative gains for absolute gains in the political game of the northern subregion. This implies an increasingly open political and economic competition among the Nordic countries. This does not mean a negation of the generally accepted claim that contacts among the Nordic countries on all levels are unusually common, but that European integration today functions as the common frame of reference.

The scope of Nordic cooperation in recent years is, however, increasing rather than decreasing. The Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers underwent reforms in 1995, primarily due to the Swedish and Finnish membership of the EU. A new structure was established and new issue areas were added, not to mention EU questions, involving areas like the environment, unemployment, sex equality, consumer and food problems. In addition, aid programmes for the near abroad i.e. the Baltic countries, North Western Europe and Arktis were established and implemented. The cooperation also increased in the area of foreign policy, and new issue areas were added, such as meetings of the ministers of foreign affairs. In the Nordic Council sessions, foreign policy and security policy are regularly on the agenda.

Cooperation with other countries is, however, increasing even further. The Nordic ministers of foreign affairs now have regular meetings with their Canadian, their Russian and their Baltic counterparts. But what is more important, the CFSP of the European Union is now the main forum for coordinating and determining policy declarations.

The Danish position on the Northern Dimension

Among the relevant Danish policy-makers, the Finnish proposal has been greeted as a possible way of expanding the EU's interest in the region. By involving more countries than those belonging to the region itself, the Finnish proposal might pave the way for a more comprehensive Western involvement in the Baltic countries, Russia, and Poland. Issues such as the environment, nuclear security, energy, international crime and human rights are not just the concern of the Nordic countries, they are just as relevant to the Central and Southern European countries and consequently it makes sense to involve these states in the relevant policy decisions. Furthermore, most of the East European countries covered by the Northern Dimension are either shortlisted candidates for EU membership or on the verge of becoming so. By alleviating some of the problems that these applicants face, the EU avoids the risk of "importing" them into its political and economic structures, and thus avoids later tensions between old and new members. The three other main reasons for Danish support of the Northern Dimension are the implicit values in the proposal, the pivotal focus on Russia, and the need for an entity that can coordinate existing efforts in the region.

First, the value foundation of the Northern Dimension is virtually identical to the platform that Denmark and probably the other Nordic countries base their Baltic Sea policy upon. The

Danish attitude is that cooperation is about much more than the wish to establish a broad political dialogue between the countries in northern Europe, and is an attempt to overcome the former contrasting norms and values of the bipolar world, and to establish and confirm the commonality of interests on a wide range of issues. Through this partnership, softer definitions of security are established as key elements in the relations between states, which not only reduce the risk of military tensions and political misunderstandings, but also make it possible for the countries to discuss many different issues at once and in conjunction. The establishment of a political dialogue thus becomes a goal in itself, as well as a necessary tool in ensuring the success of specific projects. The Northern Dimension proposal embraces these thoughts through its focus on a broad security concept, its aim of establishing a soft security region, and its emphasis on the importance of a candid dialogue between the former East and West, and between all relevant political actors in the area.

Second, the Northern Dimension proposal appears to see Russia as a potential ally rather than as an adversary. Though this might seem logical considering the new general partnership security structure in Europe and Russia's size and geopolitical importance, it is in fact a complicated issue. Russia is wary of a possible rapid and accelerating expansion of NATO but it is certainly much more at ease with the enlargement of the EU. One can, however, expect Russian concern about the future development of the EU taking over the tasks of WEU. Add to this a fear of isolation from the European economic and political institutions, which have considerably more influence than the OSCE, which Russia has traditionally championed. Russia is primarily aiming at close cooperation with the EU, and the Northern Dimension can ease this attempt in two ways. First, by clearly indicating that WEU or an EU taking over WEU-tasks is not an intrusive element to West European policy in Eastern

Europe. The emphasis on soft security issues contributes to reducing Russian tension. Second, the Northern Dimension seems to see a constructive, coordinated dialogue as a foreign policy goal in itself. The dialogue does not mean that Russia has a veto privilege in the EU, nor that the EU countries should invite Russia to the table when EU foreign policy is initially discussed. But when it comes to European security, Russia is still an indispensable country and its concerns should be heard.

Third, Denmark acknowledges that there is a need for coordination of the many efforts in the region and that the EU through the Northern Dimension might serve this purpose. There are three compelling reasons for this:

First, to avoid rivalry: The Nordic countries compete on who can contribute the most and possibly gain influence in the domestic politics of the Baltic countries. Such competition can be a good thing if it results in larger funding to the receiving countries. But if it means that money is wasted on prestige projects or that there are damaging political agendas behind the donations there might be a need for co-ordination in order to ensure the largest possible benefits for the Central and East European countries.

Second, to reduce inefficiency: There is inefficiency due to simple unawareness of what other organisations and states are doing – work is occasionally done in duplicate or not at all because one institution believes that another will see to it.

Third, to help form partnerships: Some tasks are too complicated to be handled by a single country or organisation. They must be lifted by partnerships, possibly involving public and private institutions from several countries. Though there are many good examples of how this can be done successfully, the tasks of finding potential partners and coordinating the efforts are often difficult for the individual entity.

Though these are convincing arguments for greater EU involvement in the region, the coordination responsibility will bring some difficulties with it. First, in order to ensure member

support for the idea it is crucial that the Northern Dimension does not lead to increased bureaucracy or demand for funding. This would greatly reduce its appeal in Denmark and no doubt in other member states. Second, the EU should respect the local expertise in the region without being submissive to it in its decisions. And finally, the EU must learn how to handle two difficult balancing acts. The first is between the northern countries that are currently most active in the region, and the southern countries that will demand real influence if the EU is to represent them in this matter. The other is between the EU and Russia, who will have to find a new equilibrium in their relationship if the Northern Dimension is fully implemented. How Russia can be involved more directly is still difficult to say, but the Finnish proposals of extended cooperation on single issues could turn out to be a fruitful approach which would "spill over" to some of the more sensitive areas of concern.

Denmark sees only a few clouds on the otherwise bright Northern Dimension horizon. Though Finland has promoted it, the idea is really the product of a strong Nordic tradition established after the end of the Cold War. If the remainder of the EU perceives the proposal as merely a Finnish attempt to escape its own particular security situation (bordering Russia, outside NATO), there would be a risk that it will be dismissed as pure politics without policy. Due to the wise presentation of the initiative this has, however, not been the case.

It is also important to find ways of involving the western non-EU members. Though Iceland and Norway have not been as prolific after the Cold War as Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany, they still share many of the same security concerns and possess resources and expertise which they are willing to use in addressing them. The risk is that if the Northern Dimension becomes too EU-centric, these valuable partners will not be included in the work. Consequently, the regional organisations that include these countries, most importantly the

CBSS and the Nordic Council, could be integrated into the EU policy in the area. It is still too early to say how this can be done, without involving some of the other points of disagreement between the EU and the countries outside and without taking influence away from the southern member countries. The practical attempts to widen the Northern Dimension have, however, been promising.

Though Denmark sees Northern Europe as an area of great importance, other parts of the former east-west division are important as well. It is not feasible that the Northern Dimension becomes synonymous with the EU's foreign policy and that areas such as the Balkans, Yugoslavia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Turkey are ignored. It will be possible to apply experiences gained in one part of Europe to the others; the Nordic members should be focused on contributing to this work as well. Not just because, by analogy, the developments in these parts will matter to northern Europe, but also because it will greatly hurt the chances of implementing the Northern Dimension if the Nordic countries neglect the rest of Europe. This problem also seems to be in the process of being solved, however.

Conclusions

As should be apparent by now, Denmark strongly supports a more visible Northern Dimension in the EU. Though the concept is still somewhat fuzzy, it appears to be based on the principles that Denmark and other Nordic countries have promoted in the region throughout the decade. This includes some issues that are not always considered as part of soft security, such as human rights and standards of social policy. The Northern Dimension could integrate seamlessly into the EU enlargement plans, and is likely to greatly reduce the potential problems associated with it.

Denmark believes that the European Union is well prepared to meet the challenges and appear truly unified in the Northern region. If the EU is successful, it will not only increase the prosperity and security of the Central and East European countries more than the combined member countries are doing today, it will also help its current members through the building of new markets and the establishment of a new security agenda that will help to ease a variety of potential problems from market failures and environmental disasters to civil war and streams of refugees before they reach western Europe. From a bird's eye view, a successful and coherent policy for the northern region could constitute a major foreign policy victory for the EU and serve as a brilliant example of the feasibility and credibility of the CFSP. The Northern Dimension could set a precedent for a more integrated "Southern Dimension" than is the case today.

At the very least, Denmark welcomes the Northern Dimension because it is bound to draw more attention to and appreciation of the special challenges and opportunities that the northern region contains today. The Northern Dimension is now EU policy. The problem is how to implement it. This process will presuppose a debate on the policy- maker levels of the different member countries.

Notes

[1] See "Summary of the Report by the Danish Defence Commision of 1997", in *DUPI Yearbook* 1999, p. 177-191.

[2] Cf. Bertel Heurlin, "Global, Regional and National Security", DUPI, Copenhagen 2000. See also Håkan Wiberg, "The Nordic Security Community", *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 2000*.

[3] *Baltic Security*, Gunnar Arteus and Atis Lejins (eds.) (Tallin, 1997).

[4] See "Danmarks Baltikum-politik", *Udenrigsministeriets temahæfte 13*, September (1998) and *NEBI Yearbook 1998*, 1999, 2000.

[5] Bertel Heurlin: "Er Danmark lavspændingsområde?", in *Danmark og det Internationale System*, ed. by Bertel Heurlin and Christian Thune (København: Politiske studier, 1989) p. 115-134.

[6] Cf. Bertel Heurlin (2000), "Global, Regional and National Security", and "The Baltic States in World Politics", ed. by Birthe Hansen and Bertel Heurlin (London: Curzon, 1998).
[7] www.state.gov/www/regions/eur/nei_hp.html.
[8] Cf. Bertel Heurlin, "Denmark and the Northern Dimension", DUPI, Working Papers 1999/11, Copenhagen 1999.
[9] Ibid.
[10] "Danish and European Security. A Summary", *Danish Committee on Security and Disarmament*, Copenhagen 1995. See also Arteus and Lejins, Baltic Security (op.cit.) p. 79-100.
[11] See *"European Integration and National Adaptations"*, ed. by Hans Mouritzen et al (New York: Nova Science Publications, 1996).
[12] Morten Kelstrup, "Danmarks deltagelse i det internationale samarbejd – fra pragmatisk funktionalisme til aktiv internationalisme", in Fred og konflikt, ed. by H. Gottlieb et al (Copenhagen: SNU, 1991) s. 289-312 and Hans Mouritzen, "Denmark in the Post-Cold War Era: The Salient Action Spheres", in *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 1997*.
[13] Udenrigskommissionen, "Udenrigstjenesten mod år 2000", *Betænkning nr. 1209*, Copenhagen 1990.
[14] Birthe Hansen, "Dansk Baltikum-politik 1989-95", Dansk Udenrigspolitisk Årbog 1995, DUPI, 1996, s.35 - 66.
[15] "Danmarks Baltikum-politik", *Udenrigsministeriets temahæfte nr. 13*, September (1998)
[16] See *"Årlig redegørelse"*, published each year by the Danish Ministry of Defence (MOD) and "An Overview of Danish Defence Cooperation with Partners in 2000", MOD, Copenhagen, Dec. 1999.
[17] See "Rusland", *Udenrigsministeriets temahæfte, nr. 19*, Dec. 1999.
[18] See reference in note 16.
[19] See reference in note 1.
[20] See reference in note 17.
[21] Peter Viggo Jakobsen, "Denmark at War: Turning Point or Business as Usual", *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 2000*, DUPI.
[22] See "Dansk sikkerhedspolitik" and "Danmarks Baltikum-politik", *Udenrigsministeriets temahæfte nr. 12 og 13*, Juli and September 1998.
[23] Cfr. "Nordic Security Today", *Special Issue of Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. XVII, No. 4, 1982.
[24] See reference in note 17.
[25] Henrik Larsen, "Denmark and the European Defence Dimension in the Post-Cold War Period: Opt-out or participation", *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 2000*, DUPI.

A Dutch hope: Towards a greater coherence

Kees Homann

Introduction

The Netherlands has a long history of contact with the "Northern Region", due to its being ideally positioned for international trade and its maritime-commercial tradition. As the North Sea coast provides access to Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea, the Netherlands was, centuries ago, the natural commercial mediator of north-western Europe. The maritime-commercial tradition in Dutch foreign policy dates back to the fourteenth century when the Dutch began to ship freight from the Baltic Sea to the Mediterranean.[1] As early as 1600, the enormous Dutch fleet dominated all shipping in the Baltic Sea region.

In the political sphere, contacts between the Netherlands and the Nordic countries were intensified during the last century when it became clear in the interbellum that the League of Nations would be unable to defend the rights of Small Powers.[2] The Netherlands took the initiative for a declaration of the Oslo states in 1936, in which it, together with Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and Norway, limited the binding force of League resolutions concerning the maintenance of collective security. The Copenhagen Declaration stated that a League member would not be obliged to comply with decisions involving sanctions if its military situation or geographical position were precarious.

During the Cold War, in the military sphere, the Dutch armed forces, especially the navy, became heavily committed to the defence of NATO's Northern Flank.

Nowadays, the political cultures of the Nordic countries and the Netherlands have a strong emphasis on egalitarian, post-materialistic and international-humanitarian values in common. This is expressed in the form of a relatively high priority for aid and development, environmental management, human rights, the United Nations as the embodiment of international order and a wide participation in peace support operations.

In the field of aid and development, the Netherlands and the Nordic countries, trying to meet the demands of developing countries, moved between the haves and have-nots, attempting to promote some mutual understanding by performing an intermediary role. Development cooperation as a policy area offers the Dutch and the Northern Region an attractive role in the world, namely that of doing what is deemed one's duty, implementing UN goals, and thereby setting an example to other, more powerful nations.

Dutch perceptions of European integration

The Netherlands is firmly committed to the EU, not least because Dutch policy-makers have always considered the removal of trade restrictions very beneficial for the country and an essential requirement for its prosperity. Trade was and still is the life-blood of the Netherlands. It is the world's seventh largest exporting country (about 55 per cent of GNP consists of exports) and the third when it comes to agricultural exports. The Netherlands is also a leading transit and distribution centre, with Rotterdam and Schiphol functioning as the gateway to Europe. Dutch companies are responsible for 30 per cent of road freight and 50 per cent of freight carried on inland waterways within the EU, and these activities are increasingly expanding in the direction of Central and Eastern Europe. As a trading nation, it is clearly in the Netherlands' interests to advocate open markets both throughout Europe and worldwide.

The integration process remains important for the economic development of the country as exports to the other EU member states still account for a significant proportion of Dutch trade. In 1995, for instance, about 80 per cent of all Dutch exports went to the twelve member states which formed the EU at that time. The new membership of Nordic countries offers fresh perspectives for Dutch exports.

However, it must be said that in recent years some policy-makers in the Netherlands have begun to have doubts regarding the benefits of further integration, emphasising the need to balance national interests against community interests. Dutch politicians and officials have started to question the unconditional transfer of national financial resources to the EU budget and have become much more concerned about the loss of autonomy in certain policy fields. The main source of this emerging reluctance among Dutch policy-makers is the fundamental change in the Netherlands' financial relationship with the EU. Since the early 1990s the country has become a net contributor to the EU, in the sense that the Netherlands' share in payments to the EU is higher than its share in receipts from the EU budget. It has made Dutch politicians and officials much more aware of the budgetary consequences of further integration as well as further enlargement.

In the field of CFSP, the Dutch government has somewhat changed its position since 1991, when proposals to give the European Council direct control over WEU, and thereby to integrate WEU activities into the EU, foundered.[3]

For a long time the main Dutch priority was the maintenance of NATO and the relationship with the United States. European cooperation in the field of foreign policy and security was seen as a possible threat to this priority. Due to the new security environment and the Maastricht Treaty, the Dutch government eventually became in favour of strengthening the CFSP in 1994. The Netherlands found itself having to adopt a more continental orientation in its involvement in Europe. Today it recognises that

Europe should not assume that the US will always be there to help us out of trouble in situations where it has no direct obligation to do so under Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty. Institutional changes like incorporating WEU into the European Union are not sufficient in themselves. The willingness to take on greater responsibility for security must also be expressed in practical terms, through greater European involvement in efforts to stabilise crises in the region. The Dutch government warmly supports the development of a European Security and Defence Policy and a European Defence Capability nowadays. But it still recognises that transatlantic cooperation is indispensable to assure European security in an uncertain future.

The Northern Dimension in Dutch political and public debate

In the Netherlands there is little debate about European integration, including the enlargement of the EU. When it comes to the issue of the "Northern Dimension", one can only speak about a positive ignorance. The media have paid hardly any attention to this development in the Northern Region of Europe. Much more attention is paid to immigration, developments in Germany and Eastern Europe, fraud, taxes, the social security system, and even South Africa, than to the developments in the EU. But the greater part of the Dutch population does not realise that some of those issues have a transboundary character and can only be solved by the European Union.

In fact, the discussion on the EU in the Netherlands is limited to a fairly small group: political parties and three advisory councils.[4] On this "elite" level, European integration is, since the founding of the European Economic Community, regarded as a precondition for Dutch prosperity and a means of creating

stability as a function of integration. At the same time, coordination of policy within Europe is regarded as a first step towards achieving the same goal at the global level. Notwithstanding the discussion on the financial contribution to the EU, the Netherlands has benefited greatly from the European integration process – and continues to do so. This applies in particular to the economic dimensions of the process, including the single market and the EMU. As the Union expands, care will have to be taken to ensure that the economic and institutional achievements of the first pillar are preserved. However, with respect to the "Northern Dimension", there is also a positive ignorance on the elite level. Most members of the Dutch Parliament are not even aware of this development in Northern Europe.

The Finnish initiative from the Dutch government perspective[5]

As might be expected, the Finnish initiative is supported by the Dutch government. The recent EU enlargement embracing Sweden and Finland, the forthcoming enlargement with the Baltic states and Poland, and the present fragile stability in the region justify a strengthening of EU policy towards the North. It can reinforce the positive interdependence between Russia and the Baltic Sea region. When taking into account the considerable foreign policy interests which can benefit from this, the Dutch government considers a better and more directed use of the available EU instruments of utmost importance.

The Netherlands hopes that the development of a Northern Dimension in EU policy will lead to a greater coherence of existing and new activities in the Northern region and will put accents on the external and sectoral policy of the EU. The concept of the Northern Dimension should, in the opinion of the

Dutch government, be complementary to existing fora in the sense of offering a coordinating strategy within the framework of existing contractual relations, financial instruments and regional organisations. Measures should be taken to prevent the overlapping of activities. The Dutch government emphasises that the development of a Northern Dimension will also create the possibility to involve the Russian Federation more effectively in the process of regional integration, which will enhance security, stability and sustainable development in Northern Europe. It can contribute to a normalisation of relations between Russia and the Baltic states and it will reinforce the positive interdependence between the Russian Federation and the Baltic Sea Region and the European Union, notably by achieving further synergies and coherence in these policies and actions. The Dutch government acknowledges the economic and security role of Russian trade with and *via* the Baltic countries, which should be stimulated by measures taken by political and business leaders from EU countries. Lastly, the Northern Dimension will make it possible for the EU and other multilateral organisations to give higher priority to aid programmes such as Phare and Tacis. In short, in the opinion of the Dutch government, the ultimate goal of the development of a Northern Dimension is greater stability in the Northern Region of the EU.

Nevertheless, the Dutch government emphasises that a close relationship between the northern and southern states is essential for the European Union as a whole. A number of issues are potential sources of friction between the north and south in the coming years, including financial and economic questions and the relative importance of stabilising the eastern and southern flanks of the continent. But as the Dutch government considers Europe to be indivisible, the Northern region should be on the agenda of the whole of Europe. In this respect the Dutch government also sees an important role for the OSCE in

this region, especially in the field of Russian minority problems in the Baltic states, which is a source of tension between the latter and Russia. An attempt should also be made to include the Baltic states in the CFE Treaty area, as some Russians still see the Baltic region as a pathway for foreign armies invading Russia.

The adapted CFE treaty which was signed in Istanbul on November 19, 1999 is better designed – unlike its predecessor – to cope with change. Under the adapted treaty, any OSCE member can accede to the treaty with the approval of all current treaty members. Due to the security concerns of Russia and the Baltic states, membership of the adapted CFE treaty of those states should be encouraged

In the opinion of the Dutch government, Finland, Sweden and Denmark and the European Commission should take the lead in the development of the Northern Dimension. Finland as *"pater intellectualis"* of the Northern Dimension should be the most active player. The Netherlands will support initiatives in this area, and when any coordination structures are established it will keep a finger on the pulse. As an observer in the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the Netherlands has an incidental perspective at least.

Dutch perceptions of areas of interest in the Northern Dimension

In the opinion of the Dutch government, the Northern Dimension can have clear added value in the following areas.

Politics

The Northern Dimension can contribute to stability in the region. As there are no direct military threats in the region, stability mainly rests on soft security issues. The best

institutional framework for coping with those issues is not a military alliance, but the EU or the OSCE. The "near abroad policy" of the Russian Federation and the minority problems in the Baltic states have created tensions between the latter and the Russian Federation. They pose a serious threat for the present fragile stability in the region. The Northern Dimension should be focused on the promotion of stability by:
– on the project level, contributing in a more coordinated way to the economic development of especially North-West Russia/the Baltic states; and
– supporting a stronger role for the EU as a "foreign policy player" in this region;
– establishing confidence and security-building measures.

Environment

Environmental management is seen as an important component of Dutch foreign policy.

One of its aims is to give shape to the responsibility that the Netherlands shares with other countries for sustainable development. Environmental policy-making within the framework of the EU was boosted by the accession of Northern countries which, like the Netherlands, are very environmentally aware. The Northern Region is confronted with serious problems which also threaten the West. The region contains a number of major sources of pollution and the risk to the environment is significant. Pollution in the Baltic Sea and its littoral states affects wide areas within the Union, the associated countries and Russia. Those are closely related to the exploitation of fuel, mineral and forest resources. Moreover, some nuclear power plants which have become unsafe pose a significant safety risk for Europe. Nuclear waste is not properly managed or stored, especially on the Kola peninsula. Spent nuclear fuel and operational waste from submarines and ice-

breakers are a primary source of concern in the region. The coast has already been contaminated and there is a threat to local fisheries. The Netherlands participates in the Nuclear Safety Account (NSA), which made contributions to Lithuania and the Russian Federation to improve the safety of some reactors. In cooperation with the United States and Norway, the Netherlands aims at support for the dismantling of nuclear military installations in Russia. Another considerable problem is posed by the presence, in Russia, of large arsenals of chemical weapons which will need to be disposed of. The Netherlands is assisting Russia in this field. The Netherlands will benefit from tackling those problems in a coordinated way because the minimisation of negative environmental impacts is of central importance to all European countries. It should be brought to the attention of the responsible authorities more strongly by the EU, and EU assistance programmes should give a high priority to those environmental problems.

The Netherlands will also benefit from a coordinated approach to the improvement of the quality of the water in the Baltic Sea. This concerns an integrated approach to watercourses which are used for different purposes (i.e. industry, drinking water and agriculture).

Besides opposing the degradation of the environment in a general sense, appropriate attention has to be paid to issues of particular concern such as biodiversity, wetlands and forests. The Netherlands is already active in this area through its bilateral cooperation with Russia.

Transport and energy and trade

To promote stability in the region, the EU should cooperate with regional fora to establish clear priorities and coordinate assistance programmes (Phare, Tacis, Interreg) devoted to, among other things, the transport, energy (gas) and trade

sectors. The economic development and interdependency of the North will require the development of transport infrastructures and the establishment of new connections with European-wide networks by establishing Trans-European Networks and the implementation of the pan-European transport corridors (the so-called Helsinki corridors). The aforementioned areas belong to the traditionally strong sectors of Dutch trade and industry. The Netherlands will derive benefits from an efficient use of means in those areas. The long-term availability of oil and natural gas is a high priority strategic issue for the EU. It is in the EU's interests to ensure that it has secure and reliable sources of energy.

The Netherlands has a special interest in further implementation of the EUCARIS system with respect to information exchange of registration numbers.

In the field of transport, the Netherlands will take a thorough look at the consequences for the position of the Netherlands as a gateway and at the different modes of transportation such as shipping, inland navigation and road and railway transport. This takes into account the possible development of a North-South corridor, which can have an unfavourable effect in the mid to long term.

Still, to sum up, it may be said that the Dutch government is in favour of the Finnish proposal of a "Northern Dimension" in the EU. But the Dutch government has emphasised that swift progress should be made in its development because otherwise there is the danger that it will become the victim of bureaucratic processes.

Notes

[1]J.J.C. Voorhoeve, *Peace, Profits and Principles, A Study of Dutch Foreign Policy*, Martinus Nijhoff, Leiden, 1985, p. 24.
[2]Ibid, p. 30.

[3] See Marja Kwast-van Duuren, The Dutch debate: a shifting policy on Europe, in: *The 1996 IGC National Debates (1)*, Discussion Paper 66, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1996, pp. 46-60.

[4] Bernard J.S. Hoetjes, The Netherlands, in: *The European Union and member states*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York 1996, pp. 155-185.

[5] Mainly based on interviews by the author with Mr. S. van der Sluis of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 2 December 1998, 17 February and 21 December 1999 and "food for thought papers" which were discussed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Italian worries and hopes: Wrong orientation but a model strategy towards the flanks

Antonio Missiroli

Introduction

Perhaps understandably, the "Northern Dimension" of the European Union – and of Europe in general – has never been high on Italy's foreign policy agenda, nor has it been a major focus of public attention. The country and its elites have always conceived and perceived themselves as primarily Southern European and Mediterranean, albeit with a West-Central penchant. Moreover, of the two key arenas of Italy's post-war foreign policy, NATO has usually been considered as having mainly an Eastern and a Mediterranean dimension – such has been, at least, the country's perception of its security exposure – whereas the EC/EU has long lacked a specifically Northern dimension. On top of that, insofar as it acquired one such dimension with the 1973 enlargement, the overall effect was to dilute the original drive for integration, in that such 'Eurosceptic' countries as the UK and Denmark were taken in. As a consequence, Italy has always tried to compensate each opening of the Community/Union to the "North" with a) a comparable opening to the "South", and b) a further "deepening" of European institutions. The Southern enlargement(s) of 1980/86 and the Single European Act are good cases in point. Besides, German unification was promptly followed by the Maastricht Treaty.[1]

Such a pattern repeated itself in the mid-1990s. If somewhat

weakened by the deep domestic crisis that started in 1992 and lasted until 1996, Italy addressed Sweden's and Finland's bids for EU membership with mixed feelings: on the one hand, every enlargement of the European "family" is welcomed by "integrationist" Italy, all the more so because the application could be read as a late recognition of the EC/EU's success story and, furthermore, because it did not affect any essential Italian interest. On the other hand, the Northern enlargement – neighbouring Austria's accession was strongly supported by Italy, in connection also with the long-overdue solution of the bilateral controversy over South Tyrol – seemed to shift the geopolitical centre of gravity of the EU further North and potentially create a new sub-regional bloc. In addition, the prevailing "post-neutral" attitudes in the candidate countries – especially after Norway's (second) 'No' to accession – sharply contrasted with Italy's increasing emphasis on a bigger role for Europeans to play in security and defence matters and with its preference for a prospective overlap of the EU and NATO's European membership. On the whole, however, Italy stayed somewhat on the sidelines during the accession negotiations, leaving the task of fighting for "Club Med"'s interests to other fellow Mediterranean countries (Greece, Spain). In part, this occurred because in 1993/94 Italy was primarily absorbed in its own deep domestic political crisis, which made it particularly inward-looking and conspicuously absent on the European scene. Yet this also occurred because, after all, Sweden and Finland – as opposed to Austria – were little known and even less familiar to the average Italian: paradoxically, the lack of knowledge (shared by Italian opinion leaders, as evidenced by regular ad hoc surveys) contributed to dispelling some fears and to making acceptance easier. [2]

Comparing interests and priorities

The latter remark helps to explain why it is quite difficult to assess what specific connotations are linked to the Northern Dimension by Italian foreign policy elites. First, there is certainly an *intra-EU* angle, mainly linked to the building of coalitions of interests inside the Council. The "Northern" EU partners are seen as less committed to the integration process: after all, only Finland joined monetary union, and it is still lukewarm on European defence. Denmark and Sweden are out of the euro and out of WEU – albeit with different statuses – and all Nordic countries (EU and non-EU) are still out of "Schengen", and with different statuses, although they may soon join collectively through the Nordic Passport Union. During the latest Intergovernmental Conference (1996/97), Sweden and Finland proposed to incorporate WEU's so-called "Petersberg Tasks" into the TEU (now art.17) – a move that was supported by Italy – but, at the same time, all Nordic EU partners opposed the proposal (co-signed by Italy) to gradually integrate the same WEU into the EU: a behaviour that was seen as inconsistent by Rome and that strengthened the overall impression of the selective 'Europeanism' of the Nordics. [3] For its part, Italy has fought hard over the years to be 'inside' Europe: therefore it is only natural that their attitudes *vis-à-vis* European integration are perceived as fundamentally different. In addition, common interests look hard to detect: this is to say that alliances and coalitions within the Nordics on specific issues may occur, if ever, rather occasionally and/or on the blocking side, i.e. by jointly opposing other countries' interests, rather than on the proactive side, i.e. by promoting causes of common concern.

A second angle encompasses the *enlargement* process. Here, again, Italy's foreign policy elites sound rather lukewarm *vis-à-vis* a new intake of EU members before a substantial deepening of the present institutional set-up is agreed upon. Generally

speaking, therefore, Italy is not on the forefront of advocacy for enlargement to Central European countries. Firstly, in Rome's view, too quick an opening risks unravelling what is presently being discussed in terms of further strengthening of common institutions and decision-making procedures. Secondly, enlargement to Central Europe has to be matched by some parallel opening to the Mediterranean basin: not so much to Cyprus though – that poses specific problems, especially with reference to Turkey's role – as to Malta, a traditional protegé of Italy's, that now seems keener on making progress on its decade-long application for EU membership. Thirdly, even among the Central European candidates, Italy has its own favourites, namely Poland, Hungary and, above all, Slovenia: here trade and economic relations, strategic calculations and cultural affinities play a cumulative role in making Italy – hardly different in that respect from other partners – a selective 'sponsor' of candidates already on the "fast track" of the negotiations. Finally, even among the remaining official candidates, Italian foreign policy elites seem inclined to promote Lithuania rather than Latvia, Romania rather than Bulgaria. In both cases, cultural factors – of a religious (Lithuania) or a linguistic nature (Romania) – are at play, although tiny Lithuania looks much easier to integrate into the EU than huge and demographically significant Romania. The recently improved relations between Poland and Lithuania have further strengthened Italy's selective advocacy, while the geographical distance and the limited interest for environmental issues help explain its lack of engagement on the closure of the Ignalina nuclear plant. [4]

The third and final angle encompasses relations with *Russia* as a strategic and regional actor. Italian diplomacy has traditionally been very keen on not antagonising Russia in Europe and on increasing economic interdependence. Foreign direct investment in Russia and bilateral trade, however, have

not been primarily directed at the Baltic coastal provinces of the country nor to areas close to the Northern European "Rim". Therefore, Italy is not particularly interested in (nor affected by) cross-border cooperation and sub-regional projects, inasmuch as they are central to the "Northern Dimension" blueprint. Yet it has no reason to oppose them as complementary means to achieving one and the same goal: the democratisation and stabilisation of Russia as a reliable regional and global partner. If some competition can be detected, it may be linked to Italian support for the (potentially alternative) Trans-European-Network Corridor that is expected to run from Trieste to Kijv via Lubljana and Budapest. Yet nothing has clearly emerged so far. By contrast, foreign policy elites still look worried about the prospect of 'importing' into the EU the problem of the status of Russian minorities in the Baltic States and of giving 'backdoor' hard security guarantees to any of the three Republics by integrating them into the Union. Italy's preference for Lithuania has to be seen in this light, too: not only is the country mainly Catholic, it also has no relevant source of bilateral tension with Moscow over domestic Russian-speaking minorities. Among the three Baltic Republics, finally, Lithuania is the one that could most easily be integrated into the Atlantic Alliance, thus minimising Russian fears about NATO's Eastern expansion: the issue of the Kaliningrad enclave is hardly considered by Italy as a serious threat to relations with the Russian Federation. This is also why Italy is basically lukewarm *vis-à-vis* the Baltics' demand to join NATO: here the imperative not to antagonise Moscow goes hand in hand with the consideration that the same countries are already involved in NATO's Partnership for Peace programme and, even more significantly, in joint peacekeeping operations such as IFOR/SFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina. No need therefore to rush developments that may unnecessarily spoil the dialogue with Moscow – and, once again, if NATO is to be enlarged any further, then other countries in Italy's

neighbourhood (from Slovenia to Albania) should be considered first. [5]

The level of interdependence

Existing economic and trade relations basically underpin this general picture. [6] They have to be sub-divided into a) relations with the Nordic countries, and b) relations with the Baltic Republics. In addition, of course, membership of the EU or the EEA affects bilateral flows remarkably. On the whole, Italy has a trade surplus with both groupings as of 1997: their relative share of Italy's foreign trade, however, is comparatively modest.

Trade flows between Italy and the Nordic countries seem to be characterised by highly relevant intra-industry flows, with only a few sectors showing strong positive (leather and footwear, clothes, textiles) or negative (food, beverages, tobacco, energy) specialisation. The leading sector in terms of contribution to the trade surplus is agricultural and industrial machinery. By contrast, trade flows between Italy and the Baltic Republics are characterised by a pattern of inter-industry trade that is quite similar to North-South economic relations: at this stage, in other words, the three Republics import everything in exchange for energy and labour-intensive productions (textiles, leather and footwear).

Bilaterally, Sweden is the most important partner among the group of countries under consideration: commercial exchanges grew by approx. 50% between 1991 and 1997, thus further easing acceptance of EU membership. With it, Italy has a growing trade deficit, at approx. 10% of the overall trade value, and Swedish investments in Italy outstrip Italian investments in Sweden. Denmark, the oldest EC/EU member among the Nordics, is the second most important partner: with it, Italy was in surplus both in 1996 and in 1997 (still due perhaps to the previous devaluation

of the lira), and the composition of trade is quite differentiated. Finland is the third most important partner, with a surplus in 1996 and a deficit in 1997: as with Sweden, foreign direct investment is mainly from Finland into Italy rather than vice versa; and, as with Denmark, the Italian degree of bilateral specialisation is very high only in clothing and leather and footwear. Norway comes fourth (third in terms of export), and Italy can boast a growing trade surplus: its composition is highly concentrated and the degree of bilateral specialisation is very high in many sectors, in that Norway only exports energy and imports almost all the remaining products. Finally, trade with Iceland is almost irrelevant: Italy is in permanent surplus, importing from Iceland only mineral, agricultural and fishery products.

Among the Baltic Republics – substantial bilateral trade flows only started between 1993 and 1994 – Lithuania is the most significant partner: the value of bilateral trade flows, however, is very limited, and Italy (presently Lithuania's fourth overall economic partner) runs a permanent surplus, mainly due to agricultural and industrial machinery and chemicals. With Latvia, trade flows are almost unidirectional: Latvia only exports textiles and Italy runs a permanent surplus, mainly due to agricultural and industrial machinery. The same goes for Estonia, which only exports minerals and leather and footwear. Yet the potential here for increasing trade and investment over the coming years is, of course, huge, as much as the potential for strengthening bi- and multilateral cultural ties, to date still underdeveloped – with the sole exception of Lithuania, whose connections to Italy are, however, primarily mediated by the Holy See and Catholic organisations. [7]

Conclusions

To sum up, it would prove difficult to argue that the "Northern Dimension" of the EU is seen by Italy as vital or even important in its own right. Yet, it is not secondary in that it raises the issue of sub-regional balancing and geographical emphasis inside the Union. In Italy's view, any further attention given to the Northern countries – both inside the present architecture and in the perspective of enlargement – should be compensated by parallel actions aimed at the Southern/Mediterranean 'Rim'. This said, Italy's foreign policy elites are well aware that, in the short term, it will be much easier to open the EU's doors to the three Baltic Republics than to Cyprus or, for that matter, Albania. Even putting Malta on the "fast-track" for accession would not match the impact of the Baltic states on the overall inner geopolitical balance of a larger Union. Yet, again, their likely membership raises the issue of representation and of institutional reform, which Italy deems necessary to address before any future enlargement.

On the whole, however, if the "Northern Dimension" succeeds in setting a precedent for more focused and more systematic EU policies *vis-à-vis* its "flanks", it will be welcome as a ground-breaking initiative for the common good: even beyond the Barcelona Process, a specific "South-Eastern" initiative, aimed at the eastern Balkans and Turkey, or an "Adriatic" dimension would then be easier to push forward.

Notes

[1] See Gianni Bonvicini, "Italy, An Integrationist Perspective" , in Christopher Hill (ed.), *"National Foreign Policies and European Political Cooperation"*, (London: Allen & Unwin,1983) pp.71-82; E. Noel, "Italia/CEE – Vizi e virtù di un membro fondatore", in *"Relazioni Internazionali"*, 1990, 2, pp.15-21; A. Sbragia, *Italia/CEE –*

Un partner sottovalutato, Relazioni Internazionali, 1992, 2, pp.78-87; M. Neri Gualdesi, *L'Italia e la CE. La partecipazione italiana alla politica di integrazione europea 1980-1991*, Pisa, ETS, 1992.

[2] See A. Missiroli, "Dall'Artico al Mediterraneo: l'Europa allargata", in *"Il Mulino/Europa"*, 1994, 1, pp.150-161; J.Holmes, *Italy in the Mediterranean, but of it ?, Mediterranean Politics*, 1996, 2, pp.176-192; M.Dassù, A.Missiroli, "L'Italia in Europa: i primi cinquant'anni", *Rassegna di sociologia*, 1996, 12, pp.18-36; PRAGMA (ed.), *L'Europa degli italiani*, Roma, 1992 (I)-1999 (VIII).

[3] See A.Casu, "Italie: vers un nouveau model de défense", in P.Buffotot (ed.), *"La défense en Europe"*, Paris, La documentation française, 1995, pp.107-116; F.Andreatta, C.Hill, *Italy*, in J.Howorth, A.Menon (eds.), *"The European Union and National Defence Policy*, (London: Routledge, 1997), pp.66-86; A.Panebianco, *Guerrieri democratici*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1997. More generally A.Missiroli, "Italy", in I.Manners, R.G.Whitman (eds.), *"The Foreign Policies of EU Member States"*, Manchester, Manchester UP, 2000 (in print).

[4] See G.Bonvicini, "Regional Reassertion: The Dilemmas of Italy", in C.Hill (ed.), *"The Actors in Europe's Foreign Policy"*, London, Routledge, 1996, pp.91-107; A.Missiroli, "Verso una più larga Unione Europea", in S.Bianchini, M.Dassù (eds.), *"Annali dell'Europa Centrale, Orientale e Balcanica"*, (Bologna: Guerini, 1998) pp.57-70.

[5] See M.Dassù, R.Menotti, Italy and NATO Enlargement, *"The International Spectator"*, 1997, 3-4, pp.65-86.

[6] The following analysis is based on the official figures of the Italian Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) and those available from the monthly Bulletin jointly published by the Italian Foreign Trade Institute (ICE) and the Italian Foreign Trade Ministry ("Scambi con l'estero – Note di aggiornamento"). I am grateful to Nicola Catellani, Sergio Lugaresi and Luca de Benedictis for their help in providing them.

[7] For a notable exception to the general lack of knowledge and interest on the Italian side see P.U.Dini, *"L'anello baltico. Profilo delle nazioni baltiche – Lettonia Lituania Estonia"*, (Padova: Marietti, 1991).

Austrian perspectives: From benign neglect towards a medium priority*

Hanspeter Neuhold

A few notes on the historical background

In order to better understand Austria's present attitude towards the EU's "Northern dimension", a glance at past relations with northern Europe is helpful. During the bygone centuries of its status as a great power, the main thrust of Austria's/the Habsburg monarchy's external policy was in the eastern and southern direction. Northern ambitions were blocked by two other great powers, Prussia/Germany and Russia.

Austria's historic links to and interests in northern Europe are therefore not very strong.[1] Associations from the past that come to mind are rather accidental and anecdotal. For instance, the Habsburg monarchy and Sweden, also a great power in the 17th century, opposed each other in the Thirty Years' War. The expression *'Schwedentrunk'*[2] ('Swedish drink') is reminiscent of those turbulent times. Swedish soldiers (but most probably also their Catholic counterparts) would force a prisoner's mouth open and pour liquid manure into it.[3] The 1864 war against Denmark was the last war which Austria won.[4]

Two streets in Vienna are named after the Austrian commander Gablenz and the battle at Oeversee in that war.[5] Close co-operation with Norway greatly facilitated the Austro-Hungarian polar expedition led by Karl Weyprecht and Julius Payer.

There is a *'Schwedenplatz'* ('Sweden square') in Vienna's

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central first district. It should evoke positive feelings, as the renaming of the former Ferdinand Square was meant as a token of gratitude for the aid which Austria had received from Sweden[6] after World War I.[7]

After World War II, Austria started to pay more attention to the countries of northern Europe. As a result of the adoption of permanent neutrality in 1955, Austria's international status and security policy resembled those of Sweden and Finland. Bruno Kreisky, the dominant figure in Austrian politics throughout the seventies and early eighties, had lived in Sweden during the world war. He developed close personal ties to Swedish social democrats, above all to Olof Palme.[8] Moreover, the Swedish welfare state served as a model for the policies of the *Sozialistische Partei Österreichs*.

Parallel interests led to co-ordination and co-operation. Thus Austria and Sweden were among the founding members of EFTA, designed as a counterweight to the EC, with which the European neutrals entered into free-trade arrangements in 1972/73;[9] by contrast, membership in the supranational Communities was ruled out as incompatible with neutrality at the time. In the CSCE process, Austria, Finland and Sweden joined forces with six other participating States and formed the "N+N" (neutral and non-aligned) group.[10] Members of this group offered their cities as venues for CSCE meetings and acted as co-ordinators and mediators in negotiations. Austria and the Nordic countries also gained considerable experience and improved their international standing as contributors to UN peacekeeping operations.

Austria,[11] Finland, Sweden and Norway[12] began accession negotiations with the EU in 1993 and successfully concluded them in 1994.[13] However, each of these applicants acted separately, without trying to improve their bargaining position at least through close co-ordination: Thus they travelled on the same train to Brussels, but in different compartments.

After the admission of the three former EFTA members to the EU, Austria and the Nordic member states sometimes adopted similar positions, together with other members within the Union, for example with respect to their opposition to provisions on common defence in the Amsterdam Treaty, on matters concerning enhanced protection of the environment, or objections to reforms of the system of weighted voting in the Council and the composition of the Commission to the detriment of the small states. However, as will be explained at greater length below, their geopolitical priorities differ, and understandably so: Northern Europe is not a region of primary interest to Austria.

Current Austrian perceptions of the Northern Dimension

The Northern region (the countries around the Baltic Sea and Norway) is at present perceived by Austrian foreign policy experts as stable, but this stability appears somewhat precarious.[14] Security, political, economic and ecological problems continue to exist there.

The balance of military power has become less lopsided than during the East-West conflict. Russian military strength has declined, but the Russian Federation continues to be a dominant actor in this field in the northern European subsystem. Since no genuine solution to the deep political and economic crisis in Russia is within reach in the short run, all member states of the EU must closely follow developments in this country. They must not lose sight of Finland's, and consequently the Union's, long common border with the Russian Federation.

Although the positive vote in the referendum in Latvia on facilitating the acquisition of Latvian citizenship should considerably defuse the minority issue in relation to Russia, problems may still arise between the Baltic states and the great

power to the east, especially if NATO accepts the application of these countries for membership. The Russian Federation must also be expected to object to Sweden's and, above all, Finland's eventual accession to the Atlantic Alliance, since such an enlargement of NATO would upset the power balance in the region and would move the territory of the alliance directly to Russia's border. The Russian enclave Kaliningrad could also cause one or the other a headache in the future.[15]

Since security must less than ever be defined not just in military terms, those responsible for security within the EU must also worry about cross-border ecological hazards and organised crime in northern Europe.

Although major negative developments in northern Europe, in particular in the field of security, cannot but affect all EU members and other states on the continent sooner or later, the region is regarded as important but not vital from the viewpoint of Austrian foreign policy, not only for reasons of distance but also due to the nature of conflicts in Austria's more immediate vicinity.[16] Consequently, Austria is at present focusing on the political powder keg in the Balkans, first and foremost on the aftermath of the crises in Kosovo, in Bosnia-Herzegovina and neighbouring countries. Another Austrian priority is the admission of post-communist candidates in east central Europe to the EU. In addition to its involvement in attempts at settling the Middle East conflict, which dates back to Bruno Kreisky, Austria is also increasingly aware of the importance of stability and prosperity in the entire Mediterranean region. The Nordic EU members, together with Germany and Norway, are supposed to shoulder the main burden of solving the problems in their region, albeit within the larger framework and with the assistance of the EU as a whole.

In the light of its experience after World War II, Austria realises the importance of good relations with the Russian Federation better than many other EU member states. It may be

recalled that Soviet forces occupied northern and eastern Austria from 1945 until the conclusion of the State Treaty in 1955. As a party to this treaty and the "godfather" of Austrian neutrality, the USSR kept a watchful and critical eye on Austria's *"Westpolitik"* towards the EC. However, after the collapse of the Soviet empire, the situation changed in Austria's favour. Soviet troops are no longer stationed in neighbouring countries. In 1995, Russia agreed that it was for Austria alone to decide on the future of its neutral status;[17] in exchange, Austria recognised the Russian Federation as party to the State Treaty.[18]

Today, Russia is weaker and farther away from Austria than during the East-West conflict. Austria's military position vis-à-vis the Russian Federation improved further after two of its neighbours to the east and to the north, Hungary and the Czech Republic, acceded to NATO in March 1999.[19] Nevertheless, Austria still has a crucial interest in good, co-operative relations with Russia and political and economic stability in this country. This is of course true for all EU member states and for the EU as a whole.[20]

A politically stable and economically healthy Russia would be an attractively huge market for EU products, important as a reliable source of raw materials, in particular oil and natural gas, and offer promising opportunities for investment. Hence a successful *"Nordpolitik"* spearheaded by the Nordic countries, which is aimed at promoting and strengthening a co-operative relationship with Russia, would be welcomed by Austria.

The EU dimension

Given the geographic location and experience of its Nordic member states, as well as its resources, the EU has an obvious comparative advantage over other institutions when it comes to dealing with the problems of the Northern Dimension.

All things considered, from an Austrian point of view, the priority assigned to the region should have a medium relevance on the EU's agenda because the Union is not confronted there with any acute crises or conflicts which are only at the beginning of a durable solution, as, for instance, in the case of the Balkans. As elsewhere, the EU ought to tackle the various issues of northern Europe in the economic and environmental fields and in the area of security policy on the basis of a comprehensive strategy – given the Union's pillar structure, this is, unfortunately, easier said than done.

This recommendation also applies to the admission of the Baltic states to the EU. Like the other applicants, they have to meet the political and economic criteria established by the European Council at its meeting in Copenhagen in 1993. In particular, they must not enter the Union before satisfactory solutions to the minority and border issues and the resulting disputes with Russia have been arrived at.

With the admission of Estonia and Latvia, two of the twelve applicant countries with which the EU is at present conducting accession negotiations, the Union will have another exclave, separated like Greece from the rest of its core territory. Moreover, the EU will then share another border with the Russian Federation – a common boundary not as long as that between Finland and Russia but perhaps politically more sensitive. The accession of Poland and Lithuania could add to the EU's problems with its new neighbour to the east, since it will result in Kaliningrad's becoming a Russian exclave surrounded by the two new member states.[21]

The EU ought to continue to assist the Russian Federation. However, the Union should mainly offer economic, political and ecological know-how and not funds whose eventual use cannot be adequately controlled.[22] Russia's agreement to further nuclear and conventional disarmament would evidently be welcome.

As regards the instruments to be used by the EU for

achieving its objectives, a stronger defence capability of the CFSP equipped with the necessary capabilities is desirable, not only for counterbalancing a less benign and co-operative Russia; it should also and primarily enable Europeans to keep order in their own house, above all in the Balkan wing, without needing American assistance in every major crisis, and to play a role in world politics commensurate to Europe's economic weight. This opinion is also shared by members of the Austrian political elite on the left side of the political spectrum who insist on the maintenance of Austria's permanent neutrality. They also support the creation of a new European security system without defining, however, the structures and basic rules of such a new regime.[23]

The Union should also support the various non-military regional co-operation schemes in the region (the Council of Baltic Sea States, the Nordic Council, the Baltic Council, the Barents Sea Council). Co-operative ties with Russia in various areas could be strengthened and perhaps (loosely) institutionalised, without giving the Russian partners the impression that they have a veto over the decisions and activities of any organisation to which they do not belong:[24] Russia must neither be isolated nor granted a dominant position in Europe.

Austrian perceptions of the Nordic countries

The Nordic EU member states are regarded in Austria as partners who have important regional roles to play and as trailblazers in certain fields such as the protection of the environment. At the same time, Denmark and Sweden appear as reluctant Union members, whose public is rather sceptical about further integration.[25] This reluctance is most visibly reflected in the refusal of these two member countries to take part in monetary union for political reasons and not, like Greece,

because of their failure to meet the convergence criteria for the introduction of the Euro.

Sweden's and Finland's "non-alignment" certainly does not facilitate the inclusion of a common defence in the CFSP:[26] But these two countries are not the only EU members to object to the transformation of the Union into a military alliance. The two governing parties in Austria, the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats, failed to agree in early 1998 on eventual NATO membership, so that Austria's (reduced) neutrality status is still maintained.[27]

In one important respect, Finland and Sweden's refusal to join a military alliance seems more understandable than Austria's reluctance to do so. The Nordic neutrals do not wish to 'rock the boat', to upset the strategic balance in their region, since such a move would in all probability lead to Russian pressure on the small and weak Baltic states. By contrast, Austria may soon find itself surrounded – except to the west[28] – by NATO members:[29] Austria's neutrality is likely to be viewed by these countries as a nuisance that interrupts important direct transit routes – as it did during NATO's air strikes against Yugoslavia in the spring of 1999, when Austria closed its airspace to the military planes of the Atlantic Alliance.

With regard to the balancing of interests, the strict respect for the sovereignty of the Baltic states and a general co-operative attitude by Russia are the logical conditions for the badly needed assistance in the above-mentioned areas by the EU in general and its Nordic members[30] in particular. It is equally evident that the Union as a whole will benefit from a successful Northern strategy as promoted, in particular, by Finland during its EU Presidency in the second half of 1999. Conversely, the EU will play a weaker regional and global role if northern Europe becomes a crisis zone.

Conclusions

The Nordic countries should campaign for a better understanding of the importance and the problems of their region among the other EU member states, at the level of governments and the political and economic elites as well as that of the mass media and public opinion. However, the Union must meet its most urgent challenges, especially in south eastern Europe, first. From an Austrian vantage point, the implementation of the EU's Northern strategy should therefore be given medium priority.

In particular, the Baltic applicants should be admitted to the Union if and when they fulfil the general criteria adopted by the EU, without any privileged treatment nor undue delay, with special attention paid to their relations with Russia. Once these countries join the Union, the latter's geopolitical centre of gravity will shift further to the north and east.[31]

As a result, the importance of Northern Dimension is bound to increase for the EU. The growth in numbers of northern EU members is also likely to be reflected in the policies and voting patterns within the Union. The collective weight of the northern members will probably grow, especially due to their well-established co-operation and solidarity.

Austria should endorse, in its own best interests, the Northern Dimension initiatives, in exchange for support by the Nordic countries for Austria's priorities in central and southeastern Europe. Both the northern and central European EU states should in turn understand the worries of their Mediterranean partners and must not neglect the Barcelona process.

In this respect, one key issue has to be squarely addressed. If the Northern strategy requires substantial additional funds, conflicts among EU members seem unavoidable. The poorer member states, especially the Mediterranean regions, are

already refusing to renounce subsidies in order to finance the next round of the Union's enlargement.

Yet, the net contributors to the EU budget, including Austria, object to higher contributions and instead call for a more equitable distribution of the financial burden, resulting in a reduction of the payments they have to make.[32]

Notes

[1] For most Austrians, northern Europe comprises the Nordic countries Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, but not northwestern Russia. In this connection, it is worth mentioning that the Nordic states and the Russian Federation are dealt with by different departments (*"Abteilungen"*) at the Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

[2] Whose meaning, however, is known to fewer and fewer native German speakers.

[3] As described in the classic German novel *"Der abenteurliche Simplicissimus"* by Grimmelshausen. The expression *'schwedische Gardinen'* ('Swedish curtain') means prison bars and also refers to atrocities by Swedish forces during that war. Kurt Krüger-Lorenzen, *Das geht auf keine Kuhhaut. Deutsche Redensarten – und was dahinter steckt* (Augsburg, 1994), pp. 102f. By contrast, a *'Schwedenbombe'* ('Swedish bomb') is a rather popular sweet.

[4] Together with Prussia; in the 1866 war against Prussia and Italy, as well as in World Wars I and II, Austria was defeated.

[5] Not that these facts are familiar to many inhabitants of the Austrian capital today.

[6] Austria also received aid from other Nordic states, also after World War II.

[7] Peter Antengruber, *Lexikon der Wiener Straßennamen. Bedeutung. Herkunft. Hintergrundinformation. Frühere Bezeichnung(en)* (Wien-München-Zürich, 1995) pp. 182.

[8] Together with Willy Brandt, Kreisky and Palme formed the famous social democratic "triumvirate".

[9] In line with its cautious policy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, Finland concluded an association arrangement with EFTA in 1961 and became a member of the organisation as late as 1986.

[10] Together with Cyprus, Liechtenstein, Malta, San Marino, Switzerland and Yugoslavia. See *CSCE: N+N Perspectives: The Process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe from the Viewpoint of the Neutral and Non-Aligned Participating States* ed. by Hanspeter Neuhold (Vienna, 1987).

[11] Austria's decision to apply for EC membership in 1989 initially met with little enthusiasm and even with criticism from Finland and Sweden.

[12] Norway eventually stayed out of the EU after the Norwegians voted against the EC/EU in a referendum for the second time after 1972.

[13] After the negative outcome of the referendum in Switzerland on membership of the European Economic Area in 1992, the Swiss government shelved its application for admission to the EU.

[14] The following references to Austrian perceptions and positions are based on the opinions of Austrian diplomats contacted by the author; the explanations and comments are his own. Due to the relatively low priority accorded to northern Europe, there is no official document on Austria's strategy concerning this region.

[15] See below, p. 8.

[16] This assessment is not specifically Austrian but seems appropriate for the list of priorities to be adopted by the EU as a whole.

[17] *Die Presse* of 17 October 1995.

[18] Austria initially wanted to get rid of the *droit de regard* over its foreign policy which the USSR had claimed under the State Treaty. However, the recognition of the identity between the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation was not a major concession by Austria, since it was part of the *acquis* Austria had accepted upon joining the EU.

[19] After the defeat of Vladimir Meciar's governing coalition in the parliamentary elections of September 1998, Slovakia's chances of admission to NATO have improved, especially since the country supported NATO's air attacks on Yugoslavia in the context of "Operation Allied Force" in the spring of 1999.

[20] However, a negative turn of events in the Russian Federation would cause more concern to Austria than, for example, to the Iberian countries or Ireland.

[21] Hanspeter Neuhold, "Die politische Dimension der nächsten EU-Erweiterung", *Österreichisches Jahrbuch für Internationale Politik* 15/1998 (1999), pp. 131-143.

[22] The Common Strategy on Russia adopted by the Cologne European Council of 3/4 June 1999 should provide a good basis for the Union's relations with the Russian Federation.

[23] A common defence as mentioned in the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaty would be tantamount to a pledge of mutual military assistance in the event of an armed attack on a member state. Also without NATO membership, such an alliance commitment is incompatible even with a neutrality status which is reduced to its "hard (military) core". There is general contradiction between support for a stronger CFSP and the refusal to provide the Union with a defence identity and capacity; in a still militarised world, the possibilities of a "civilian great power" are limited.

[24] This caveat seems appropriate in the light of the controversies over Russia's powers under the 1997 Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security Between NATO and the Russian Federation.

[25] According to the Eurobarometer poll of September 1998, Austrians are most enthusiastic among the three newcomers about the results of EU membership: 43% of the Austrians interviewed believed that their country had benefited from accession to the EU, 33% of the Finns, only 20% of the Swedes; the EU average was 46%. Negative answers were given by 35%, 36% and 21%, respectively. Profil No. 40 of 28 September, 1998. Strong public support for Austria's EU membership continues despite the imposition of sanchions by the other 4 member states against Austria because of the Freihetliche Partei Österreichs in the new coalition government in February 2000: according to a poll published in March 2000, 60% should still vote for, 34% against Austria's accession to the EU in a new referendum. Profil No. 10 of 6 March 2000.

[26] The term "non-alignment" is ill-chosen, since it already applies to a large movement of mainly developing countries with different priorities that was founded in Belgrade in 1961. Hanspeter Neuhold, "The New CFSP and Neutrality: Prospects and Policy Options", in *Approaching the Northern Dimension of the CFSP: Challenges and opportunities for the EU in the emerging European security order* ed by Mathias Jopp/Riku Warjovaara (Helsinki – Bonn: Finnish Institute for International Affairs –Institut für Europäische Politik 1998), pp. 64-77.

[27] Among the political parties, the Social Democrats, the Greens and the Communists demand the maintenance of neutrality, whereas the Christian Democrats and the Liberal Forum call for its abolition.

[28] Where it borders on (permanently neutral) Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

[29] As pointed out above (note 19) after the electoral defeat of the coalition headed by Vladimir Meciar, whose democratic record left a great deal to be desired, in September 1998, the stage could be set for Slovakia's rapid admission to NATO and the EU. Slovenia is regarded as a sure candidate for the second round of NATO's eastern enlargement.

[30] And of course also Norway.

[31] Hanspeter Neuhold, "Die politische Dimension der nächsten EU-Erweiterung", *Österreichisches Jahrbuch für Internationale Politik* 15/1998 (1999), p. 135.

[32] The general mood in Austria is not favourable to the widening of the EU. A Eurobarometer poll in the autumn of 1998 revealed that the Austrians only supported the admission of Hungary (55% : 34%) and, strangely, of Malta (44% : 35%), whereas a majority opposed the accession of all the other ten candidates. By contrast, public opinion in the 15 member states as a whole approved of the admission of all candidates except Romania and Slovenia. *Die Presse* of 1 April 1999. A subsequent Eurobarometer opinion poll showed that this negative attitude had even increased. Once again, Austrians only endorsed the applications of Hungary and Malta, but the respective majorities had decreased (for Hungary, 45% : 40%, for Malta 38% : 36%). *Die Presse* of 8 July 1999.

German ambitions and ambiguities: EU initiatives as a useful framework

Uwe Schmalz

Introduction: How 'northern' is Germany?

A glance at the map, and at Germany's coasts to the North Sea and the Baltic Sea in particular, suggests that the North functions as a strong magnet for the compass of German foreign and security policy. According to this logic, the North even increased in relevance with German reunification in 1990 when the Federal Republic's Baltic coast expanded by 250 kilometres. However, one linguistic detail of our geographical excursus modifies this first assessment: The German term *"Ostsee"* ("Eastern Sea") reveals that German perceptions focus on the Baltic Sea as an intermediary link towards the East rather than towards the North.

Indeed, the predominant German focus on the East increased considerably in relevance after the end of the Cold War when Germany became a central power in the undivided Europe.[1] Due to this new *Mittellage*, Germany is the one EU member state which is most directly affected by all – positive and negative – developments in the former communist bloc. Hence the vital German interest in establishing a comprehensive and stable political, economic and security order throughout Europe, particularly by enlarging the EU and NATO.[2] For obvious geostrategic reasons, however, Germany focuses primarily on the transformation of the directly neighbouring Central and Eastern European (CEE) region rather than on the North. This new *Ostpolitik* gained even more significance with regard to the Kosovo conflict and the unstable situation in south-eastern Europe.

Besides its predominant focus on central and eastern Europe, Germany also feels an affiliation towards the South. In fact, Germany is torn in cultural and religious terms between a "northern Protestant head" and a "southern Catholic heart."[3] Although its "northern head" has been significantly reinforced with unification, Germany remains extremely interested in the fate of the South as can be seen in the Red-Green Federal Government's Coalition Agreement which explicitly defines the aim "to influence the EU to better meet its responsibility in particular towards the countries of the South."[4] Hence, Germany's "northerness" is relative and ought to be seen within the wider context of the country's European *Mittellage*. Within this context, however, the North, and particularly the eastern Baltic Sea region, is of considerable relevance for German diplomacy.

Germany shares with the North longstanding traditions of close co-operation which have their roots in the *Hanse*, a commercial association of northern littoral states (12th to 15th century) stretching from Novgorod to London. It was only when the Baltic Sea became a front line of the Cold War that (West-) German links with the region were literally frozen and had to give way to the logic of the balance of military power between East and West. After the artificial division of the North was swept away with the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989/90, the Baltic Sea regained some of its traditional significance for Germany. The North is now seen as a crucial factor for overcoming the old dividing lines of the Cold War period and for establishing new constructive and stable East-West relations. It is here where the EU has a common border with Russia and where the question of EU and NATO enlargement has to be tackled within the context of the historically and psychologically charged relationship between the Baltic states and Russia. Therefore, Berlin perceives northern stability and security as a crucial strategic issue for Germany and for Europe as a whole. In particular, the Baltic

question and the task of restructuring the Baltic Sea as a European *Mare Nostrum* is regarded as a "litmus test" for the future European security order and for the vision of a Europe based on co-operation rather than on hegemonic big power aspirations.[5] Moreover, the Baltic Sea region poses a large number of soft security challenges such as organised crime, ecological devastation, migration or minority issues which directly affect a central and wealthy country such as Germany. According to Hans-Henning Horstmann, then deputy political director of the German Foreign Office, it is therefore "in German national interest that security, stability and prosperity in northeastern Europe be increased. There will be no lasting stability in Europe without lasting stability in the Baltic Sea area."[6]

The North in Germany's foreign and security policy

A key factor in understanding the present German approach towards the North and the Baltic Sea region in particular, lies in the past. It was the Hitler-Stalin-Pact of August 1939 between National Socialist Germany and the Soviet Union that caused the tragic fate of the three Baltic states for the next five decades to come. Due to this historical legacy of the Third *Reich*, the Baltic Sea region is, for Germany, a most sensitive area for which it feels a special responsibility and a moral obligation. Consequently, Berlin sees itself as an 'advocate' of Baltic aspirations for membership in the Euro-Atlantic institutions and strongly promotes the principle of indivisible security according to which every country has the right to freely choose its alliance. Never again, so the German argument goes, will big powers decide on the fate of a smaller country and its status within the European order.

Berlin's policy towards the Baltic Sea region is embedded in

an overall foreign and security policy approach with three central points of reference: transatlantic co-operation, European integration, and relations with Russia.[7] Notwithstanding the 1989/90 watershed, Germany continues to regard transatlantic co-operation and European integration as indispensable features of its diplomacy. These features do not only serve the mere symbolic purpose of proving to the outside world that unified Germany remains a reliable international partner but are based foremost on pragmatic considerations: With its own experiences of reunification in mind, Germany is strongly convinced that the process of transformation in the CEE countries goes far beyond the potential of national foreign policies and therefore can only be tackled within the framework of the Euro-Atlantic institutions. Moreover, the issue of NATO and EU enlargement is, for Berlin, a psychologically important matter of principle for overcoming Germany's historical guilt about the Second World War by establishing a comprehensive European order of stability, security and prosperity beyond the old dividing lines of Yalta.

The third point of reference, the so-called "Russian factor", became even more relevant after 1990. Despite its decline in terms of military strength, political influence, and economic potential, Russia is still perceived as a crucial factor for the European order. Historical experience, particularly with regard to the 1914 July crisis, together with the potentially impending threat of the politico-economically weak and psychologically wounded former super power, prevents Germany from underestimating the significance of Russia for European security. Consequently, German diplomacy is convinced that the future European security order must be realised "not against but with Russia"[8] and that "it would be disastrous for Europe to exclude Russia."[9] For Germany, considering Russian interests is, however, not only a strategic necessity but also a moral obligation due to Moscow's approval of German unification in

1990 and the timely withdrawal of its troops from German territory soon after.

The three central points of reference of German diplomacy form a highly complex foreign and security policy setting for Berlin's approach towards the North. The multitude of special interests and historically charged commitments towards the East, which find their expression in Germany's self-understanding as advocate of the Baltic states[10], of the CEE countries[11] as well as of Russia[12], together with the focal points towards the West, i.e. the process of deepening and widening the EU, the special relationship with France, the transatlantic relations and the process of NATO enlargement, constitute a broad range of factors which are not always easy to reconcile. The picture becomes even more diffuse with a view to Germany's increasing focus on domestic problems such as the budgetary deficit or unemployment imposing potential limits on Berlin's foreign policy commitment. Being based on a multitude of external and domestic foci, Germany's approach towards the North becomes a difficult balancing act between several (potentially) inconsistent priorities and therefore threatens to get stuck in the complexity of its overall foreign policy setting.

Ambitious but ambiguous – Germany's policy towards the North

German diplomacy's activities in the North concentrate foremost on the eastern Baltic Sea region.[13] They include the initiative, together with Denmark in March 1992, of founding the CBSS, the assistance by means of the so-called "Transform Programme" and the financing of 28% of the PHARE programme.[14] Besides this technical-financial assistance, Germany provided non-material support for the Baltic ambitions for membership of NATO and the EU by successfully

insisting that the Alliance remains open in principle for the Baltic states and by inventing in 1997 the model of 'soft distinction' between the first negotiation group and other EU accession candidates such as Latvia and Lithuania.

However, with its initially strong advocacy for the Baltic states' integration into the Euro-Atlantic institutions gradually losing momentum and becoming more and more 'realistic'[15] Germany did not develop a consistent and comprehensive strategy towards the North that would correspond to its high ambitions and that could serve as an adequate means to tackle the complex security challenges of the region. Instead, critics speak of a "reserved"[16] German role or even of Germany's "non-policy" towards the North, claiming that a special German northern or Baltic Sea region policy does not exist.[17] Only the North German *Länder* such as Schleswig-Holstein or Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, pursue a very active approach towards the Baltic Sea region where they have historical links and favourable business opportunities.[18] The activities include twin-cities, economic and cultural exchange, political lobbying, the promotion of a "new Hanse concept"[19] and the maintenance of a "Hanse office" in Brussels. These activities, however, remain limited to economic and cultural co-operation and cannot serve as compensation for the lacking overall German approach to northern security.

What are the reasons for Germany's rather modest profile in the North? Firstly, the 'Russian factor' and the strategic interest to include Russia in a comprehensive European security partnership allows only for those activities which do not impair the special relations between Berlin and Moscow. Secondly, the CEE region proved to be of comparably greater importance than the Baltic Sea region. In particular, the unexpected costs of reunification and serious budgetary constraints led Germany to concentrate its financial support foremost on the accession of strategic partners in its direct vicinity, such as Poland, Hungary

or the Czech Republic. Thirdly, due to its historically and psychologically charged relations with the Baltic Sea region, German diplomacy is careful not to fuel potential impressions of intending to play a leading role in the Baltic issue or of having territorial claims towards Kaliningrad or the Baltic states.

The constant need for balancing diverging interests, for considering historically charged relations and for promoting various "advocacies", functions as a tight straitjacket for Germany's policy towards the Baltic Sea. German diplomacy avoids taking sides in the complex and heterogeneous spheres of interest which make northern security a highly sensitive issue. Instead, it prefers the instruments of quiet diplomacy and pragmatic solutions.[20] This policy, however, does not allow for a grand design and a clear profile for adequately tackling the complex security challenges of the North. Instead, it remains a rather ambiguous exercise between high aspirations and tight constraints. A telling example of this ambiguity is the rhetoric of former Chancellor Kohl who, in 1998, characterised the Baltic states as "belonging to the heart of Europe" and spoke of EU membership for all Baltic states in the "very near future"[21] while pursuing *de facto* a most cautious policy under the strict reservation of the "Russian factor"[22] thereby becoming for the Baltic states a "symbol of disregard."[23] So far, the Schröder Government is continuing with the ambitious but ambiguous German approach towards the Baltic states, leaving the Balts with the impression that the prospect of their accession to the Euro-Atlantic institutions lost its former relevance for the West and for Germany in particular.[24]

Potentials and limits of the Northern Dimension

The Finnish initiative on a Northern Dimension of the EU[25] could serve as a compensatory framework and as a catalyst for

Germany to overcome the underlying contradictions of its policy towards the North. The framework of a comprehensive and consistent EU-strategy towards northern security would allow German diplomacy to promote more actively and effectively its ambitions as "advocate" of the Baltic states and to fill the present conceptual vacuum of its northern approach. Establishing an ever closer network of co-operation in the Baltic Sea region with the perspective of the Balts' eventual full EU membership thus serves Germany's interest in strengthening the security and independence of the Baltic states, thereby stabilising the region as a whole. This bottom up approach corresponds particularly to the Red-Green Federal Government's concept of promoting the CFSP as a means "for civil conflict prevention and the peaceful settlement of conflicts."[26] Moreover, the Northern Dimension could play a useful role in streamlining the Union's individual policies and instruments and strengthening the network between the EU and other organisations in the North, thereby generating synergies and a more effective and coherent approach towards the North. From a German perspective, this streamlining function of the Northern Dimension would provide an important added value for the EU's existing policies. A creation of new instruments and institutions beyond existing ones such as the PHARE and TACIS programmes or the CBSS, however, is strongly rejected.[27]

Furthermore, the EU's Northern Dimension corresponds to Germany's priority of including the Baltic states in Western structures and institutions without alienating Russia. The EU has a comparable advantage in dealing with the "Russian factor" since Moscow does not perceive it as a potential security threat but, rather on the contrary, focuses on its civil character and its economic potential. European efforts to including Russia into a network of northern co-operation can build on the already existing framework of the EU-Russia partnership and co-

operation agreement, the TACIS-programme and the common strategy on Russia. Moreover, a stronger EU commitment to the North would allow for a more independent European approach, facilitating a balanced regional co-operation with Russia and preventing disturbing effects of U.S. activities on the "Russian factor". Berlin's opposition to American membership of the CBSS proves that Germany, despite its generally positive attitude towards the U.S. engagement in the Baltic Sea region, is not interested in an excessive American role that would disturb the sensitive networks of co-operation in the region.[28]

The enhanced multilateral co-operation within the EU's broader framework allows Berlin to participate actively in northern affairs without fuelling impressions of taking the lead or of pursuing old territorial claims in the region. Furthermore, the Northern Dimension is a useful forum for reconciling intra-EU interests and for engaging the Union as a whole, thereby keeping the more remote southern member states interested in the EU's northern approach. For Germany, this integrative function of the Northern Dimension is of particular importance, since a split of regional interests into northern, southern and eastern fractions amongst the EU member states would seriously endanger its central aim of deepening and widening the EU[29] and would bring Germany into a position between the respective regional "frontlines", imposing on it the unintended role of mediator between conflicting interests and preventing it from effectively promoting its own interests.

For all these reasons, Berlin regards the Northern Dimension as a useful framework for strengthening the security of the Baltic Sea region through the bottom up approach of establishing an ever closer network of co-operation and interdependence with the perspective of eventual full EU membership for the Balts. For German diplomacy "the economic co-operation and integration of the Baltic states in the West is the real foundation of their future security."[30] This soft security approach, however, has to be

clearly separated from the question of military security. Berlin does not (yet) perceive the EU and its CFSP as a relevant means for providing hard security. Instead, the task of military defence remains clearly confined to NATO: "Also in the future NATO will be the guarantor of peace and security in Europe."[31] For Germany this is not only a technical question due to the lack of adequate European military structures and hardware. Rather, Berlin regards this question as a matter of the principle of indivisible European security and the right which every state has to freely choose its alliance. With its historical legacy in mind, German diplomacy insists on these principles as a means to prevent a new Yalta that would consign the Baltic states to a grey zone of security between Russia and the West. Therefore, Berlin strictly rejects any tendencies of regarding EU enlargement as a potential compensation for NATO enlargement towards the Baltic states. This compensatory approach, which is apparently in the minds of some American politicians and foreign policy strategists[32], is perceived by German diplomacy as a 'cheap trick' that would give Moscow a *droit de regard* for the European security order, dredging up bad memories of the Baltic states' fate after 1939. Hence, despite its ambitions to develop further the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI), Berlin regards EU enlargement and NATO enlargement as two autonomous processes and promotes a clear division of labour in the European security architecture: The EU (and its Northern Dimension) is the appropriate institution for soft security. NATO is responsible for defence and hard military security. Only in the field of crisis management have both organisations competencies and instruments which ought to be developed further and might eventually even be merged.

This division of labour does not exclude mutual influences between both spheres of security. On the contrary, the EU's approach towards the North and particularly the perspective of EU enlargement is well seen in the context of supporting the

process of NATO enlargement. By including Russia in a strengthened framework of co-operation, interdependence and mutual trust in the North, Moscow's aversions to NATO enlargement into the former Soviet Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania could be considerably reduced allowing eventually for their 'smooth' accession to NATO. The EU's soft security measures would thus create the basis for the long term European security architecture. The EU can become an even more effective mediator between the transatlantic alliance and Russia given the further development of the ESDI as outlined in the Cologne declaration of June 1999 on strengthening the common European security and defence policy.[33] This would allow the EU/WEU to create a "web of co-operative security"[34] including the assistance of the CEE and the Baltic states' adaptation to European and transatlantic security structures and the development of a political and security dialogue with Russia which already began modestly in the WEU framework[35] and which will be extended into the EU framework as provided for in the common strategy on Russia.[36] The EU/WEU would thus function as a bridge for establishing relations of mutual trust between the West and Moscow, thereby eventually reducing the latter's aversions to further NATO enlargement. Accordingly, Berlin regards the EU and its Northern Dimension as a catalyst rather than a compensation for NATO enlargement.[37] Together, NATO and the EU are perceived as the institutional anchors of stability in Europe and as the most appropriate answers to today's security challenges. Opening and adapting both the EU and NATO to the changed security threats is perceived by German diplomacy as "an essential part of our preventive security policy in transferring stability and securing peace for the whole of Europe."[38] The Northern Dimension is regarded as a "significant" ("*bedeutsam*")[39] component of this approach.

Northern repercussions on European integration from a German perspective

Germany shares similar political and social values (as well as problems) with the Nordic EU states and admires their innovative approaches in the field of environmental protection. Hence, the Nordics are regarded as important partners for promoting common values within the EU and for finding European solutions for central issues such as combating unemployment, modernising the social welfare systems or protecting the environment. Nordic attitudes towards European integration appear to be heterogeneous.[40] Finland is perceived as a purposeful inventor of new ideas, a dynamo for European approaches and a reliable partner in the EU. Meanwhile, even the majority of the Finnish public seems to support the pro-European approach of its government. On the other hand, Denmark and Sweden appear as rather reluctant EU members who, instead of being 'passionate' champions of European integration, tend to regard the EU in terms of costs and benefit. The Danish referendum against the Maastricht Treaty is still remembered as a severe blow against the dynamics of European integration. Furthermore, both countries' reluctance to join the European Monetary Union for political reasons was regarded with considerable displeasure in German European policy circles.

Sweden's and Finland's reluctant approaches towards European integration are not in line with Germany's explicit endeavour "to develop the CFSP further towards greater communitarisation" by strengthening qualified majority voting and extending European foreign policy competencies.[41] In particular, the northern zone of non-aligned EU member states, which might well expand with the Baltic states' EU membership, is hampering German ambitions of developing further the ESDI, including a common European defence capacity and the

integration of the WEU into the EU. However, despite the problematic incoherence between EU and WEU memberships, German diplomacy does not regard the non-alignment of current and prospective EU members as necessarily preventing the development of ESDI. During the 1996/97 Intergovernmental Conference, the Nordic non-aligned countries particularly promoted the inclusion of the Petersberg Tasks in the Amsterdam Treaty, thereby enabling the EU to assume a responsibility in military crisis management. Furthermore, the Amsterdam Treaty allows neutral and non-aligned countries to fully participate in the planning, decision-making and implementation of WEU crisis management operations. Hence, with the growing blurring of the distinction between NATO/WEU allies and non-allies, non-alignment might lose its meaning in the long run.[42] Furthermore, German diplomacy is recognising with great interest Finland's and Sweden's tendencies to regard non-alignment more pragmatically as a means to preserve the fragile status quo of the Baltic Sea region rather than a matter of principle and national identity.[43] Particularly with regard to the experiences of the Kosovo conflict, both countries seem to acknowledge the task of NATO and the necessity for establishing a greater European responsibility for security policy and defence by means of closer EU-NATO co-operation. For these reasons, German diplomacy sees a considerable potential for including the Nordic non-aligned countries in strengthened European security and defence structures.

During its EU Presidency in the first semester of 1999, Germany made a great effort to include the non-aligned EU members in the development of the ESDI. In its Presidency report on strengthening the European security and defence policy[44] that was adopted by the Cologne European Council of 3/4 June 1999 the German government left a number of fundamental questions open in order to meet the non-aligned

member states' reservations against a 'militarisation' of the EU. By doing so, however, Berlin was well aware that the 'real' obstacles still lie ahead on the way towards strengthening the ESDI and integrating the WEU into the EU.[45] It therefore remains to be seen whether the EU member states' diverging approaches and (non-)alliances, including the northern zone of non-aligned EU member states, can be constructively reconciled or if they will become a stumbling-block on the way towards a strengthened ESDI – thereby impairing a central aim of Germany's European policy.

Conclusions and outlook

The Northern Dimension has the potential to provide an added value for both the EU and for Germany in particular. It constitutes a useful framework for streamlining the Union's respective policies and enhancing its external profile as a regional actor, without, however, creating new instruments or programmes. For Germany in particular, the Northern Dimension might serve as a means to loosen the straitjacket of conflicting interests and to reconcile the underlying contradictions of its historically charged approach towards the North. Furthermore, the Northern Dimension is a valuable component for coping with the complex security challenges in the region, for exporting stability and security into the Union's sensitive north-eastern vicinity and for contributing to the establishment of a comprehensive European security order for the 21st century. The Northern Dimension has a preventive function not only for external security, but also for the inner cohesion of the EU by keeping all member states interested in the fate of the North. This is all the more important since the prospective enlargement of the EU towards the Baltic Sea region will further increase the weight of the North in the shaping of

European affairs, thereby enhancing the potential for conflicts of regional interests. For all these reasons, German European policy should continue to actively support the Northern Dimension in its own best interest.

Moreover, Berlin should expand its perceptions of the North beyond the restricted focus on security threats and challenges to European stability by also taking notice of the potential and the rich opportunities which this region affords, particularly for the German economy. So far, only the coastal *Länder* are aware of the favourable northern business opportunities. However, the German economy as a whole, unlike other European economies, seems to ignore the extraordinary potential of the "little tigers in the Baltic Sea region"[46] as well as their strategic importance as a transitory link to the vast Russian markets. This disregard of existing opportunities certainly has to do with negative perceptions and prejudices towards the security situation in the region. Germany should therefore endeavour to shape a more sober picture of both the challenges and the opportunities of the Baltic Sea region. This would facilitate the establishment of closer economic, cultural and political links which would eventually also enhance the prosperity, stability and security of the region. The Northern Dimension of the EU could certainly support such an extension of German perceptions.

So far, it is not clear to what extent German perceptions and approaches towards the North might be affected by the shift from the Bonn to the Berlin Republic. In geographical terms, Berlin is only a bit more northern but a lot more eastern compared to Bonn. This might well lead to a strengthened focus on the CEE countries. Hence, the North is likely to remain within the shadow of Germany's strategic interests in the East. Furthermore, with the 1998 change of government, the Federal Government was taken over by a new generation of policy leaders who, having no personal experiences of Germany's historical legacy, are heralding a more pragmatic foreign policy

approach. On the one hand, this new pragmatism, together with the enhanced focus on domestic issues such as unemployment and financial constraints, could result in a greater German reluctance towards an engagement in the North and towards EU membership for the Baltic States. On the other hand, it might well allow for a stronger German profile and greater room to manoeuvre in the North due to decreasing German reservations with regard to the "Russian factor". Though stressing the imperative of good relations with Russia, the Schröder government is determined to replace the previous Federal Government's limited approach towards Moscow and its predominant focus on then Chancellor Kohl's personal friendship with President Yeltsin with a much broader and more pragmatic Russia policy. During its EU Presidency, Germany successfully conducted the definition of the common strategy on Russia which was adopted on 4 June 1999[47] and which defines a coherent approach including all three EU pillars, obliging not only the Commission and the Council but also the member states to act together consistently, introducing a broad range of measures as well as a detailed evaluation procedure and streamlining the fora for regional co-operation including the framework of the Northern Dimension.[48] With its engagement, Berlin considerably contributed to the formulation of a common strategy that has the potential to introduce an added value to the EU's existing Russia policy and that corresponds to the comprehensive soft security approach of the Northern Dimension.

In order to maintain and even enhance their partners' interests in the North, the Nordic EU members should optimise their marketing of the Northern Dimension initiative. One possibility would be to put more emphasis on the opportunities and chances of co-operation in the region rather than promoting the Northern Dimension merely in terms of security threats. Furthermore, the Nordics and their EU partners should work

together to develop the Northern Dimension further towards a "Northern Strategy" including the definition of clear aims, concrete measures and the institutional framework for implementing the initiative. The Amsterdam Treaty offers the possibility to define such a comprehensive northern approach by means of a common strategy within the framework of CFSP. Moreover, the Nordics could devise a regular exchange of ideas, views and experiences particularly with the southern EU member states. This would provide the northern EU member states with an access to the longstanding experiences which their southern partners have in regional co-operation and would support the mutual understanding and reconciliation of regional interests. In all these measures, Germany could and should take an active part. This would correspond with its status as an important and central EU member state as well as with its interests in both a strong northern approach and an engagement of the EU as a whole.

The Northern Dimension of the EU must not follow a one-dimensional approach. Rather, it ought to be considered within the multi-dimensional context of complex security challenges, diverging interests, regional structures, historical sensitivities, multiple alliance-memberships and non-memberships, special bilateral relations, cultural identities and different policy styles; in short: it ought to be considered within the context of the complicated ensemble called Europe. Only a multi-faceted approach will enable the EU to use the Northern Dimension effectively as a means for considerably strengthening its external profile, for stabilising its north-eastern vicinity and for maintaining its internal cohesion. Being at the crossroads of multiple spheres of interests and regional affinities, Germany has a lot to gain from and to contribute to a multi-dimensional concept of the EU's Northern Dimension.

Notes

[1] See Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Die Zentralmacht Europas. Deutschlands Rückkehr auf die Weltbühne.* (Berlin 1994)

[2] See Joachim Krause, Kooperative Sicherheitspolitik: Strategische Ziele und Interessen, in *Deutschlands neue Außenpolitik.* Volume 3, Interessen und Strategien ed by Karl Kaiser,Joachim Krause, (Munich 1996) pp. 77-96.

[3] Quentin Peel, The EU's real split, in *Financial Times*, 25 February 1999, p. 14.

[4] Coalition Agreement between the Social Democratic Party of Germany and Bündnis 90/The Greens, 20 October 1998. The section on CFSP is printed in CFSP Forum 4 (1998), p. 7.

[5] See Hans-Dieter Lucas, United Germany, the Baltic States and the Baltic Sea Region, in *The European Union and the Baltic States. Visions, Interests and Strategies for the Baltic Sea Region.* ed by Mathias Jopp, Sven Arnswald (Helsinki / Bonn 1998), pp. 171-190, here: p. 172.

[6] Hans-Henning Horstmann, The Road to European Integration – A German View, in: *"Towards an Inclusive Security Structure in the Baltic Sea Region"*. 2nd Annual Conference on Baltic Sea Security and Cooperation – A Selection of Texts, in http:www.usis.udemb.se/bsconf/bscover.htm.

[7] See Axel Krohn, Security Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region: Germany as a Transatlantic and European Actor, in *Baltic Security. Looking towards the 21st Century.* ed by Gunnar Artéus, Atis Lejins (Försvarshögskolan 1997), pp. 111-125, here: p. 111.

[8] Wolfgang Ischinger, Nicht gegen Rußland. Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit im Ostsee-Raum, in *Internationale Politik*, 2 (1998), pp. 33-40, here: p. 34. Ischinger was at that time political director and is now state secretary of the German Foreign Office.

[9] Policy Statement by Gerhard Schröder, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, in the Bundestag on the German EU-Presidency, 10 December 1998, p. 10.

[10] See Lucas, op. cit., p. 171.

[11] See Policy Statement of Chancellor Schröder on the German EU-Presidency, op. cit., p. 9.

[12] See "Deutschland will Anwalt Rußlands werden", in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20 February 1999, p. 17.

[13] Other parts of the North, such as the Barents Sea region, are of hardly any significance for German foreign and security policy.
[14] See Lucas, op. cit., p. 174.
[15] See Sven Arnswald, The Politics of Integrating the Baltic States into the EU: Phases and Instruments, in Jopp / Arnswald, op. cit., pp. 19-99, here: pp. 77-82.
[16] Atis Lejins, The Baltic States, Germany and the USA, in *German and American Policies towards the Baltic States: The Perspectives of EU and NATO Enlargement* ed by Sven Arnswald, Marcus Wenig, (forthcoming).
[17] See Krohn, op. cit., p. 111. See also Peer H Lange, *Perspectives on Germany's Role in the Baltic Sea Region. A contemporary German View, in German and Danish Security Policies towards the Baltic Sea Area: 1945 until present* ed by Gunnar Artéus, Bertel Heurlin (Copenhagen 1998), pp. 52-69, here: p. 62.
[18] See for the activities of Schleswig-Holstein in the Baltic Sea region (including a section on the Northern Dimension): Bericht über die Aktivitäten der Landesregierung im Ostseeraum 1997/98, in http://www.schleswig-holstein.de/landsh/mjbe/download/ostseebericht.doc.
[19] See Jasper von Altenbockum, Auf dem Weg zur modernen Hanse, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7 July 1998, p. 16; Wulff, Reinhold / Kerner, Manfred: Die neue Hanse. *Working Paper of the Institut für Internationale Politik und Regionalstudien*. Berlin 1994.
[20] See Lucas, op. cit., p. 175.
[21] Then German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, quoted in Lucas, op. cit., p. 179.
[22] Lange speaks of an "empathetic approach towards Russia" (Lange, op. cit., p. 59).
[23] Jasper von Altenbockum, Keine Angst vor Riga, Reval, Wilna. Die deutsch-baltischen Beziehungen unter Rußland-Vorbehalt, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 5 March 1999, p. 16; See also Lejins, op. cit.
[24] See Lejins, op. cit.;"Balten wundern sich über Schröder. Erwartungen für NATO-Beitritt gedämpft / Erweiterung fortsetzen", in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9 February 1999, p. 8; Bernd Nielsen-Stokkebye, Banges Warten im Baltikum. Nach der Enttäuschung über die NATO nun auch Besorgnisse mit Blick auf die EU, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 14 January 1999, p. 12; Hort, Peter: Enttäuschung im Baltikum, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 10 July 1998, p. 14.

[25] See for the concept and the aims of the Northern Dimension: Hanna Ojanen, How to Customise your Union: Finland and the Northern Dimension of the EU, in: *Northern Dimensions*. The Finnish Institute of International Affairs Yearbook 1999. (Helsinki 1999), pp. 13-26.

[26] Coalition Agreement, op. cit.

[27] See Lucas, op. cit., pp. 183-186.

[28] See Lucas, op. cit., p. 182.

[29] See Quentin Peel's assessment: "it is a naked struggle between north and south, a cultural, religious, climatic and geographical divide which threatens to re-emerge and bring the affairs of the EU to a standstill. (...) This sharpening of the north-south divide could undermine the entire development of the EU, and with it, the enlargement process to the east." (Peel, op. cit.).

[30] Quotation from a summary of interviews with German foreign policy officials, in *Subregional Security Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Area. An Exploratory Study* ed by Olav F. Knudsen, Iver B Neumann, (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, No. 189. March 1995), p. 17.

[31] Policy Statement of Chancellor Schröder on the German EU-Presidency, op. cit.

[32] See Ronald Asmus, Robert C Nurick, NATO Enlargement and the Baltic States, in *Survival*, 38 (1996), pp. 121-142.

[33] See Annex III to the Presidency Conclusions of the Cologne European Council of 3 and 4 June 1999.

[34] Peter van Ham, U.S. Policy toward the Baltic States: An Ambiguous Commitment, in Jopp / Arnswald, op. cit., pp. 213-234, here: p. 226.

[35] See Dmitri Danilov, Stephan de Spiegeleire, Russia and Western Europe: Towards a New Security Relationship? WEU Institute for Security Studies, *Chaillot Paper no. 31*. Paris 1998.

[36] See Annex II to the Presidency Conclusions of the Cologne European Council of 3 and 4 June 1999.

[37] See Karsten D. Voigt, Die baltischen Staaten in die NATO? Plädoyer für die Mitgliedsperspektive, in *Internationale Politik* 7 (1998), pp. 39-40.

[38] Horstmann, op.cit.

[39] Ischinger, op. cit, p. 38; See also: Wolfgang Ischinger, The Future of the Baltic States: A German Perspective, in Arnswald / Wenig, op. cit.

[40] See Jasper von Altenbockum, Neuer Kohl, alter Schwede. Europa-Politik zwischen Helsinki und Stockholm, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 22 December 1998, p. 16.

[41] Coalition Agreement, op. cit.

[42] See Hanspeter Neuhold, The New CFSP and Neutrality: Prospects and Policy Options, in *Approaching the Northern Dimension of the CFSP: Challenges and Opportunities for the EU in the emerging European Security Order* ed by Mathias Jopp, Riku Warjovaara (Helsinki / Bonn 1998), pp. 64-77.

[43] See Jasper von Altenbockum, Oase der Stabilität. Die Ostsee zwischen Allianzfreiheit und NATO-Erweiterung, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 23 April 1999, p. 11; Markus Zydra, Glaubwürdig sein und trotzdem neutral bleiben. Schweden und Finnland unterstützen die NATO-Angriffe, geraten damit aber unter Rechtfertigungsdruck, in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 3 May 1999, p. 6.

[44] See Annex III to the Presidency Conclusions of the Cologne European Council of 3 and 4 June 1999.

[45] See for further details: Uwe Schmalz, Die Kölner Gipfelerklärung zur europäischen Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik: Durchbruch oder Sackgasse?, *in CFSP/GASP Forum 2* (1999), pp. 4-6.

[46] Otto Graf Lambsdorff, Die kleinen Tiger im Ostseeraum. Die Marktbedingungen in den baltischen Staaten werden unverändert positiv beurteilt, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 11 March 1999, p. 19.

[47] See Annex II to the Presidency Conclusions of the Cologne European Council of 3 and 4 June 1999.

[48] See for further details: Uwe Schmalz, Aufbruch zu neuer Handlungsfähigkeit: Die Gemeinsame Außen-, Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik unter deutscher Ratspräsidentschaft, in *integration 3* (1999), pp. 191-204, here: pp. 198-200.

Portuguese expectations: Partnership among peripheral countries

Maria João Seabra

Introduction

After the end of the Cold War, European geography acquired new dimensions. Up to 1989, the East-West division had been the only geographical dimension relevant for the analysis of European security, overshadowing all others. After 1989, we have witnessed the emergence of new geographical dimensions: Southern Europe, Northern Europe, Central Europe and Eastern Europe are now operational concepts for the analysis of European security. The existence of these new operational dimensions does not mean that Europe is less secure but rather that the specific security problems of each of the regions can now be examined discretely. Before 1989, the dominant security dilemma was the position of each country *vis-à-vis* the East-West confrontation; today, each European country must take other geographic dimensions into consideration when defining the security policy. At the same time, the end of the Cold War and the new European security environment, in which direct military threats have diminished but security risks persist, demands a more integrated vision that combines security with economic and social policies.

In this new context, the Portuguese position is very clear: it is a Southern European country, with a firm commitment to European and Atlantic security institutions. It has to deal with the security problems of each of its partners and be capable of

attracting the attention and co-operation of its partners to deal with its own security and foreign policy concerns and priorities.

Evolution of Portuguese foreign and security policy

Up to 1986, Portuguese foreign policy priorities were centred on the Atlantic, on NATO and the relationship with the United States in the North Atlantic, as well as with Africa and the African Portuguese-speaking countries in the South. With accession to the European Community, Europe became a key element in Portuguese foreign policy. With full membership of the European Community, Portuguese foreign policy priorities began to change. The process was twofold: on the one hand, there was a "Europeanisation" of Portuguese foreign policy priorities, with the inclusion of previously "national" foreign policy issues, such as East-Timor or Latin America, on the European agenda. On the other hand, regions like the Mediterranean rose on the list of priorities.

With the end of the Cold War, Portuguese foreign policy changed yet again within the framework of NATO, and Central and Eastern Europe became dominant regions in security policy. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the political relations with the CEECs and Russia become more important. At present, the prospect of enlargement of the Union has led to a greater foreign policy focus on the candidate countries, including the Baltic states. As it confronts enlargement, there is one issue that is always present: Union enlargement to the East and the North demands additional support for the South. A new stability in the East afforded by the enlargement of the Union should be accompanied by the reinforcement of co-operation with countries that are not going to join the Union, especially in the Mediterranean region. The same applies to NATO, in that the Portuguese government is pressing for a greater NATO

involvement in the Mediterranean, proposing the creation of a framework similar to the Partnership for Peace that will include the Southern Mediterranean countries.

The Portuguese position on the CFSP, and its security dimension in particular, has changed significantly in recent years. At the 1991 IGC, the Portuguese government was not very enthusiastic about the institutionalisation of a common foreign and security policy as it feared that a common security and defence policy might damage the relationship with the United States. Portugal favoured NATO as the main framework for European defence and wanted it to remain central to that framework. At the 1996-97 IGC, the position had changed significantly. The Portuguese government clearly supported the reinforcement of the CFSP, the incorporation of the so-called Petersberg Tasks into the new Treaty, and the integration of the WEU into the European Union. Following the Cologne and Helsinki European Councils and the push for the reinforcement of the security and defence dimension of the Union, the Portuguese government is supporting the rapid integration of the WEU into the EU.

The security dimension will be one of the top priorities of the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union, in the first semester of 2000, taking advantage of the simultaneous Presidency of the WEU. For the Portuguese government, the developments in the CFSP and in the Common European Security and Defence Policy are a commitment to the establishment of an autonomous and credible operational credibility, providing the Union with the military capacity to carry on the Petersberg missions.[1]

Portugal and the Northern enlargement of the EU

When the Nordic countries requested full membership of the

EU, Portugal strongly supported their accession. On the one hand, Portugal had a tradition of relations with Finland, Norway and Sweden due to common EFTA membership. On the other hand, it was felt that the accession of these countries would help Portugal to fight any drastic reform of EU institutions. Since they were all small countries, the Portuguese government thought that they would be important allies in the discussion about the balance of power between small and large states. The neutrality issue was clearly set aside, but this was consistent with the Portuguese position on the development of a European defence identity at that time. Portugal did not consider that accession would undermine the future development of the CFSP; indeed, it ignored this issue.

Today, the Portuguese position towards the development of the CFSP has changed significantly. It has become much more supportive of the need to develop not only a European foreign policy but also the security and defence dimensions. Although the neutrality issue is still absent, Portuguese support for the inclusion of the WEU into the EU requires an analysis of the effects of neutrality. In June 1997, the Portuguese Prime Minister recognised the historical and geographical reasons for the option of neutrality for certain European countries. However, he also asked whether it was still acceptable not to participate in the support of a free and democratic European society within the framework of a united Europe.[2]

As far as the Baltic states are concerned, the Portuguese government considers them part of the general framework of the EU eastern enlargement process. There is no discrimination, neither positive nor negative, towards the Baltic states. Since the beginning of the enlargement process, the Portuguese authorities have supported the notion that negotiations should start with *all* the candidate countries, while stressing that full accession is dependent on the capacity of the countries to fulfil the requirements established by the Union. The Portuguese

authorities will therefore welcome the formal opening of negotiations with Latvia and Lithuania. Among the general public, support for the accession of the Baltic states is slightly lower than support for the accession of the Central European countries. Nonetheless, the majority of the Portuguese are in favour of enlarging the Union[3].

EU membership, additionally, might be important for the security of the Baltic states. Accession to the EU will allow these countries to participate in European security structures and thus provide some security guarantees. As far as NATO and the Baltic states are concerned, however, Portugal maintains that their membership cannot be considered in isolation from Finnish and Swedish accession. According to the Minister for Foreign Affairs,[4] enlarging NATO to include the Baltics without Finland and Sweden would damage the geo-political rationality of the Alliance.

There is a clear awareness that the Baltic region has security risks, even though the idea of a Russian military threat is no longer really present. The Portuguese government adopted a dual approach towards the region. On the one hand, it considers that hard security issues should be dealt with mainly within NATO. The strategy is to involve Russia as much as possible in North-Atlantic dialogue structures and thus anticipate any potentially serious crisis. In this context, great importance is attached to the trilateral dialogue between Russia, the United States and the European Union. On the other hand, it is felt that the EU should act mainly as a soft security framework. The existence of a defined policy towards the Northern region, including strengthened ties with Russia, could therefore be beneficial, and the EU must accord this issue due attention.

The development of the common European defence and security policy may create an additional problem for the relations between the EU and Russia, even regarding the EU's enlargement to the Baltic countries. The development of an

operational military capability could lead to a growing opposition of Russia *vis-à-vis* enlargement to the Baltic countries. Here, once again, it is important to stress the distinction between NATO, which should remain the most important framework of collective defence, and the capacity of the EU to lead Petersberg military operations.

The importance of the Northern Dimension

The Portuguese attention to the Northern Dimension is directly connected with the proposal made by Finland, and recent events are pointing to an incipient rapprochement between these two countries. Finland and Portugal are both small countries, participating in the first group of the single currency. During the Agenda 2000 negotiations, the Portuguese government tried to gain Finnish support for the Portuguese positions, apparently with success. Another important point that might create a convergence between these two countries is the institutional reform of the European Union. Given that both are small countries, they share a common interest in avoiding an excessive concentration of power in the larger states and the formation of *directoires*.

In March 1998, during a visit to Helsinki, the Portuguese Prime Minister clearly supported Finland's proposal on a Northern Dimension, stressing that the issue was a European and not just a Nordic problem. This support is consistent with the global Portuguese position on the evolution of European foreign and security policy. Although Portugal's attention is focused mainly on the South, broadly speaking it is felt that the EU should develop a foreign and security policy consistent with the priorities of all its members. Portugal does not support the idea of a division of labour within, or regionalisation of, the EU. The main goal should be the integration of the concerns and

priorities of all the member states into the European foreign and security policy.

Although not topping the list of Portuguese priorities, the fact that Finland held the EU presidency during the second semester of 1999, immediately before the Portuguese Presidency, forced Portugal to pay more attention to northern problems. The Portuguese authorities were willing to give continuity to the efforts developed by the Finnish Presidency on the Northern Dimension.

Conclusions

It is possible to draw a parallel of sorts between Portuguese concerns over the South and the Nordic concerns about the Baltic region. From a Nordic perspective, the EU is paying attention mainly to the South and Southeast. For Portugal, the EU is concentrating on Central and Eastern Europe. Both Portugal and the Nordic countries are on the periphery of Europe, and both need the Union to develop integrated policies towards their closest neighbours which are not members of the Union. These policies would not only focus on region-specific problems, be they Mediterranean or Baltic, but also contribute to fortifying the position of the Nordic and Southern Member States within the EU itself, thereby minimising the geographical peripheral location.

The evolution of the Portuguese position on the northern security dimension will depend on the evolution of the CFSP itself. The development of an efficient and effective Common Foreign and Security Policy, as well as the common European defence policy, will give the Union a greater role in European security, and an increased responsibility in the stability of the continent and its neighbours, including those who are not going to be EU member states. If there is not a direct and specific Portuguese interest in the northern region, it is clear that the

security policy of the Union as such must necessarily include the specific security interests of its members.

Notes

[1] Programme of the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union.
[2] Speech of the Portuguese Prime Minister, António Guterres, before the Parliamentary Assembly of the WEU, 4 June 1997.
[3] Eurobarometer 49 and 50.
[4] Interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, *Público*, 29 May 1997

French concern: Northern Europe as a key point in the European debate on power and security

Fabien Terpan

Introduction

France is generally presented as a country whose external priorities have mainly been aimed at the "South", i.e. the Arab world, the Mediterranean area and Africa. Consequently, France is said to take little interest in Eastern and Central Europe and even less in Northern Europe. In 1994, Paris placed emphasis on the fact that the enlargement of the EU to Northern countries and the pre-accession strategy of Central and Eastern European countries should not be detrimental to the Mediterranean policy and to the relationship with Africa. Undoubtedly, it is difficult to identify a French Northern policy, while it is somewhat easier to define an Arab or an African policy. That does not mean that the Northern security dimension of the EU is not one of France's concerns and the priority given to the South should not be overestimated by scholars. Of course, even if it sounds like a discreet and cautious policy, the French President and Government do have a position towards Northern Europe.

Through diplomatic means and on a bilateral level, they try to *develop the political and economic ties* with the North. While visiting Finland and Sweden, both President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin underlined the positive impact of Swedish and Finnish accession on the bilateral relations between France and the Northern countries.[1] For example, trade exchanges with Finland have been 60% up since it first joined

the EU, while French exports to Sweden have doubled since 1995.[2] Their policy is also aimed at strengthening security and stability in the Northern area and in Europe on a larger scale and bringing Northern EU member states round to the idea of European political and military power (the EU becoming a major power through an efficient and successful CFSP.[3])

The accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden has been taken into account particularly with regard to the building of a European security and defence identity.[4] In the mid-1990s, French plans appeared to be hampered because the newcomers increased the number of member states which did not agree with the idea of a European common defence set on the basis of WEU. The Northern countries' refusal to take part in military alliances – especially WEU – was perceived as a new difficulty by the French government, already confronted with the British pro-NATO position.

At the end of the decade, the gap between the position of the different partners has been reduced considerably as each of them has modified its position. A compromise has been reached allowing the "neutral" countries to take part in the European security and defence policy, restricted in the present day version to crisis resolution (which does not imply that the "neutral countries" will necessarily evolve towards a participation in a system of collective defence, the ultimate – and uncertain – goal defined by the Europeans at Maastricht).

Besides, France identified certain threats coming from the North-European area, even though the government has remained quite silent about them.[5] Those threats, involving Russia and especially its relations with the Baltic countries and Finland, are considered in a global European context. A balance between the security of the Northern states and the interests of Russia has to be found in order to strengthen peace and stability on the European continent. For Paris, the EU must make the most important contribution. The main goal must be the

accession of the Baltic countries to the European Union and NATO, as well as the tightening of EU-NATO / Russia links.

The North in the EU's security and defence policy

EU enlargement to Northern countries was initially considered as a major obstacle by France because it delayed – or even prevented – the building of a European security and defence identity. This perception has since changed.

From Maastricht until Amsterdam, the French official position can be summed up as follows:

North-European states do not contribute to the security of Europe as they should. Non-alignment and non-participation in military defence agreements generate uncertainties that are harmful to an EU in need of concrete solidarity between its members. The new members hinder the development of a common defence policy which would both imply an ability and a will to lead military operations of crisis resolution and the beginning of a common capacity to cover territories on the basis of a common assistance clause. Actually, five out of fifteen member states of the EU do not have the status of full membership of WEU and refuse to assume a share in a collective defence system. (Among the other ten, some do not really wish either to see WEU emerge as a European defence entity.) In 1992, at the Edinburgh summit, France agreed on making an exception related to the defence issue for Denmark, nevertheless considering that this was to be a transitory disposition. Likewise, the French hoped that the membership of Austria, Finland, and Sweden in the EU would lead those countries to set a program of accession to WEU. This process has not been engaged, despite French efforts to convince the Northern states.[6] In the mid-1990s, France feared that this lack of political will would prevent the EU from becoming a major power[7], and that the position and

weight of the Northern countries within the EU would strengthen the opposition to the idea of a powerful Europe endowed with real means, especially military ones. Paris asked for more solidarity from the North European countries, suspecting them of a certain egotism (an egotism the Northern countries likewise found in the French attitude, which involved undertaking a series of nuclear tests without referring to its partners).

Since Amsterdam, and particularly since the European Council of Cologne, the French position has changed. That does not mean that neutrality (even the 1990's version of neutrality) is now welcomed. But France accepts it and considers that trying to build a European military power without the Northern countries (and against NATO) would be counterproductive. Considering that the Northern countries are ready to contribute to a security and defence policy based on the French, German and British proposals, there is no longer any reason for France to exclude those countries.

Fairly recently, Paris has taken into account the participation (alongside French soldiers) of Austrian, Finnish and Swedish troops within the implementation force in former Yugoslavia, and has noticed that the newcomers did not intend to remain passive nor to hide behind their "non-alignment" policies, rather that they wanted "to contribute to" instead of "consume" security. The solution found in Amsterdam, according to a Swedish-Finnish proposal which consists of integrating the Petersberg missions into the EU Treaty, was considered a good one, though not the best.

The Cologne summit confirmed the willingness of the Northern countries to contribute to European military and non-military operations of crisis resolution. France welcomed the participation of WEU associate partners in the strengthening of EU military capacities.[8] Since Cologne, the involvement of all EU member states in the security and defence dimension has often

been underlined in French speeches.[9] As the French Defence Minister said, "the building of a security and defence dimension within the EU is meant to integrate WEU associated members and partners. Indeed, we share increasing responsibilities in crisis management on the continent and common working habits in the field, particularly in former Yugoslavia. European defence is not a zero-sum game. Everyone of us has benefited from its reinforcement as much as we have from every contribution".[10]

According to the French, the former neutral countries taking part in the EU security and defence policy shows that the process of the article J.7 of the EU treaty[11] – which is a process towards a European political and military power – is still going on. Probably, it is not the main reason for the advances made at Cologne and Helsinki. They are mostly due to the evolution of the British and French positions. Indeed, the British are now in favour of the development of a crisis management capacity inside the CFSP, i.e. outside NATO. And the French have recently accepted the primacy of NATO regarding collective defence and article 5, provided that the CFSP plays a role in peacekeeping and crisis management.[12] Yet, the importance of the evolution of the Northern countries is not to be lessened.

As far as France is concerned, the Helsinki summit proved a real success. The results are in conformity with the proposals France made alone (the "plan d'action" presented during summer 1999, after the Cologne summit) or made in conjunction with Great Britain or Germany (the Saint-Malo French and British statement in 1998, the Toulouse Franco German statement of the Defence and Security council of May 1999, the France/Great Britain and France/Germany meetings of November 1999). It confirmed the willingness of the Northern countries to contribute to these actions, a willingness which could have been less asserted now that the member states were undergoing a stage of concrete positioning of military and

decision-making structures necessary to the crisis management of the EU.

The European defence and security identity can now be laid out within the EU, without appealing to WEU as an implementing body. The settlement of military and decision-making structures necessary for crisis management by the European Union and the participation of the Northern countries have proved the uselessness of WEU, which has fulfilled its "destiny" of "merging into the EU as soon as the latter were able to take the legacy up"[13]. WEU could have retained a kind of usefulness as a collective defence body, as the Northern EU countries refuse to contribute to collective defence. But in the short and medium term, it seems that France has given up the idea of a European collective defence, NATO still being the framework for assuming the collective defence function (the framework for territory protection and nuclear deterrence is: firstly, the French national defence policy; and secondly, NATO). As the participation in a defence policy restricted to peacekeeping is not a problem for the Northern countries, France has no further reasons for supporting the idea of the existence of WEU.

France now assumes that there is no need to create a European army. If the European Union is to become a major political power, it will be through the strengthening of its crisis management capacity. In the Post-Cold War era and thanks to the dissolution of the USSR, protection is an element of lesser importance inside the alliances, as is stated in the French "livre blanc".[14] Yet, we can but wonder if France has completely given up the idea of a Europe capable of assuming its own defence in an autonomous way. This is still – at least officiously – a goal to achieve. France has always considered that solidarity was not limited to a share in peacekeeping operations, but also had to go through a defence agreement. Thus, the issue of collective defence may be raised again, one day, when the EU succeeds in

asserting the European presence in a major international crisis, which remains the priority for the time being.[15]

Where do the Baltic countries stand in such a context? France encourages the membership plans of these countries both to the EU and NATO. However, the enlargement process should not proceed too fast, in order to maintain a balance between Russia and its neighbour countries. According to the French Government and President, the accession should include the Baltic states but it first requires an important reinforcement of the European and NATO relationship with Russia.

The Northern security problems and Russia

Compared to other parts of Europe, the Northern area is characterised by a relative peacefulness and stability and an increase in regional cooperation. France really intends to reinforce its presence in the area, hence the development of diplomatic and commercial links with Northern Europe in the 1990s. However, France considers that the area is not "secured" because of the remaining uncertainties. The situation still depends very much on Russian domestic and foreign policy: the political as well as the economic troubles in Russia still give rise to many uncertainties about the future of the Northern countries and even about the future of the whole continent.

The possibility of a Russian great offensive action is no longer the major threat that it used to be during the Cold War. It is true that the Russian conventional forces are no longer a direct menace. But the Russian army has interfered several times and has maintained its presence in the nearby foreign countries, and the fact that Russia has some borders in common with a member of the EU, Finland, and with Baltic "friendly" countries is something France is seriously taking into account. In 1994, the "livre blanc" defined the situation of Russia's neighbour states,

particularly the Baltic countries, the Nordic countries and the Caucasian area, among the threats menacing France.[16] Should Russia place the Baltic states or Finland under its political and military domination, it would necessarily be a source of insecurity hardly acceptable from a French point of view. Actually, the French "vital national interests" (those implying the survival of the country), would not be threatened. Yet, its "strategic interest"[17] would undoubtedly be (any crisis occurring on the European continent and, moreover, one which concerns member states of the Union, threatens the French strategic interests).

The remaining Russian nuclear forces are taken into account by Paris. Actually it justifies both the necessity to retain a huge French nuclear capacity (considering the political instability in Russia, the hypothesis of a Russia that would use its nuclear weapons as a means of pressure towards the West remains to be seen) and the French distrustful attitude towards the Russian situation (the economic crisis and the increasing weight of the mafias and other criminal organisations) which implies a risk of nuclear waste (France is largely involved in the dismantling of nuclear arms).

The Baltic issue is considered a major one because the whole relationship between Russia and the Western countries is at stake. The French aim – *a priori* compatible with the wish of the Northern members of the EU – is to maintain a balance between Russia and the Baltic states, i.e. to strengthen the sovereignty of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia in the face of Moscow on the one hand, and on the other hand to bring Russia round to European cooperation. This position remains rather ambiguous.

Undoubtedly, France is quite understanding towards Russia despite its worrying attitude in Moldavia, Ukraine and the Caucasian area. The assault against the Russian Parliament in October 1993 was presented in the official discourse as an awkward parenthesis without major consequences. France

recently strengthened its position against the Russian military intervention in Chechnya, asking for a re-evaluation of the EU/ Russia cooperation agreement, but this position remains cautious.

What would happen should Russia threaten the Baltic countries or Finland? In 1991, France adopted a definite position in favour of the independence of the Baltic states, clearly showing a willingness to be seriously taken into account. So the Baltic countries, as well as Finland, have received quite a lot of attention from the French government. One may say that France will probably show great firmness should a dramatic increase in the Russian threat towards the Baltic states occur. The neo-nationalism of Russian foreign policy will certainly not be tolerated regarding the Baltic area, while in other areas of the former USSR it actually is.

Trying to bind the Baltic states to Europe is a responsibility that has to be shared by all the western countries. France certainly wants to be engaged in the process and wants the CFSP to make an important contribution. In 1995, the then Prime Minister, Edouard Balladur, suggested the idea of a stability pact in Europe.[18] One of the two round tables was dedicated to the Baltic area (the other to Central and Eastern Europe) and on this occasion the Baltic countries were included in a group of European states likely to join the Union.[19]

While taking part in the Russian and Baltic negotiations, France has insisted on the fact that the Baltic states should provide Russia with some guarantees. France has expressed the wish that the Baltic states, and particularly Latvia, should make an effort towards the Russian-speaking minorities, and it has suggested guaranteeing a Russian and Baltic security pact together with Germany and the USA (October 1997). While influencing Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, France has continued to favour the idea of the full membership of these countries of Western organisations. The Baltic countries should be given the

perspective of integrating into the EU, WEU and NATO despite their geographical proximity to Russia.

As far as EU enlargement is concerned, the application of all the Baltic countries, as part of a "global approach"[20] of the enlargement process, was supported by France at the Helsinki summit. The visits of the Minister of European Affairs and of the Defence Secretary of State to the Baltic area, before the Helsinki summit, were meant to demonstrate this support. Their discourses aimed at avoiding the constitution of new categorisations of candidates. Thus, all the applications are to be studied on an equal level. Even though it is obvious that "some countries will join the EU before others"[21], no country is to be excluded from the enlargement process.

France adopted a definite stance in Madrid (1995) in favour of a NATO enlargement process open to any candidate, regardless of their geographical position (i.e. including the Baltic states), even though Baltic membership of NATO was to take into account the (historical and geographical) specificity of these countries. Recently, the application of the Baltic countries to NATO was supported by France, against the USA, at the Washington NATO summit.

Of course, the normalisation of the relationship between Russia on the one hand and the EU and NATO on the other is a sine qua non condition from the French point of view. First, the Russians have to be reassured and have to be certain that such an evolution is not a disadvantage. In the mid-1990s France, together with Germany, put forward the idea of a partnership between the EU, NATO and Russia[22] (this idea was formulated at the informal meeting of Carcassonne, March 1995). Then, wondering about the US initiatives regarding NATO's enlargement, the EU suggested agreeing on regular meetings (foreshadowing a Russia/NATO agreement). Since then, the necessity for a friendly relationship with Russia, stamped with a "certain solemnity"[23], has remained a priority aim for France.

The Russian "rightful desire"[24] to be an integral part of the European security architecture, to be treated as a partner and not as a real or potential opponent, to see NATO change and be able to take part in decision making whenever it is concerned, should be taken into account from the French viewpoint. Better still, France considers that the weakness, far more than the power, of Russia is a risk for European security, hence the necessity to help Moscow on the economic scale and to preserve its political rank – a strategy that differs from the US one aiming at exploiting the difficult situation of Russia in order to weaken it still further.[25] France is bent on preserving close relations with Russia – a position which was recalled on several occasions.[26] But now that Russia cooperates with NATO (and with the EU), the matter of the application of the Baltic countries must be questioned. This is the idea France defended at the latest Washington summit, insisting on the fact that the accession could be possible thanks to a strengthening of the dialogue and cooperation between NATO and Russia.[27]

For the time being, the stability of Northern Europe is secured but there is no certainty that it will be everlasting. France hopes that both processes engaged, i.e. the integration of the Baltic states and the partnership with Russia, will be achieved in order to sustain peace and security in the Baltic area for a long time. From the French perspective, Russia is the key point: the improvement of its internal situation and its relationship with the West is the one condition that would reinforce European security and would probably allow the increased involvement of Austria, Finland, Sweden and, later, of the Baltic countries in the European defence policy (likely to lead to a European defence) and then in NATO. For the time being, the area is not a security vacuum (because Northern countries show a spirit of defence and Western organisations provide them with an indirect protection), but it is an area where some "grey points"[28], some unanswered questions, remain, and an area where the Russian

widespread need for security and influence has to be rolled back, but only by diplomatic means.

Notes

[1] As pronounced by the President of France, Mr J. Chirac, at the official dinner hosted by the President of Finland, Mr Martti Ahtisaari. Most of the French statements and speeches are available at the website of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs: http.www.france-diplomatie.fr.

[2] See Fiches techniques sur les relations bilatérales de la France [Technical notes on France's bilateral ties], http.www.france-diplomatie.fr.

[3] See the role played by the French presidency in 1995, especially during the European Council of Cannes (the summit which first gathered together the fifteen Member States).

[4] Jean-François Gribrinski (ed.), *L'Autriche, la Finlande, la Suède et la sécurité européenne* [Austria, Finland, Sweden and European security], Paris, La documentation française, 1996.

[5] Those threats were identified as early as 1994 in the "livre blanc sur la défense " [The white book on defence], Paris, U.G.E. 10/18, pp. 29-30.

[6] See, for instance, the visits paid by the French European Affairs Minister, Michel Barnier, to Sweden, Denmark and Finland in March 1996, after the election of the new President, J. Chirac.

[7] On Europe and power, see: Quermonne Jean-Louis, Le retour du politique, L'Europe comme puissance [The return of the political, Europe as a power], in Duprat Gérard, *L'Union européenne, droit, politique, démocratie* [The European Union, law, politics, democracy], PUF, 1995.

[8] Franco-British Summit, joint declaration on European defence, London, 25 November 1999.

[9] See for instance: Statement by the Minister of Defence, Mr Alain Richard, at the Institute of Higher Defence Studies (l'Institut des Hautes Etudes de Défense Nationale), 30 November 1999.

[10] Statement by the Minister of Defence, Mr Alain Richard, at the Institute of Higher Defence Studies (l'Institut des Hautes Etudes de Défense Nationale), 30 November 1999.

[11] The European Union's CFSP includes the eventual framing of a common defence policy which might in time lead to a common defence.

[12] The transformation of the Euro corps, which was announced in 1999, clearly shows such an evolution.

[13] Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Hubert Védrine, "Vers une Europe de la sécurité et de la défense" [Towards European security and defence], "Le Monde – El Pais – Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" conference, Paris, 3 December 1999.

[14] Livre Blanc sur la défense [The white book on defence], op.cit.

[15] "That is why France is against too extensive a conception of NATO's role in peacekeeping, i.e. out of art. 5, because it would hamper the development of the CFSP", Speech by Mr Hubert Védrine, 4th annual conference by the Institute for International and Strategic Relations, Paris, 5 May 1999.

[16] Livre blanc sur la défense [The white book on defence], 1994, Paris, U.G.E., 10/18, p.30.

[17] Ibid. pp. 49-50.

[18] Statement on general policy by French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur at the Assemblée nationale, 9 April 1993, *Documents d'actualité internationale,* 11, 1 June 1993.

[19] Round table report, for the European Council in Brussels (II), 10-11 December 1993, Pact on Stability, Annex I, Point I.16, *Bull.CE* 12-1993 ; TERPAN Fabien, Le Pacte de stabilité, action commune de l'Union européenne [The Pact on Stability, the European Union's common action], in *Crise et puissance* [Crisis and power], international conference in honour of L. Reboud, (Grenoble, 4 July 1994), CUREI, Espace Europe, p. 131.

[20] Joint declaration by the Minister Delegate in charge of European Affairs, Mr Pierre Moscovici, and the Prime Minister of Lithuania, Mr Rolandas Paksas, the Minister Delegate's statements, Paris, 9 September 1999.

[21] ibid.

[22] Statement by Mr Alain Juppé on the perspectives of French diplomatic actions at the 20th anniversary of the Foreign Ministry's Policy Planning Department (CAP), Paris, 30 January 1995, *Documents d'Actualité Internationale,* n°6, 15 mars 1995. Speech by President Chirac at the European Parliament, Strasbourg, 11 July 1995, in *Documents d'Actualité Internationale,* 17, 1 September 1995.

[23] Speech by Mr H. de Charette, Minister of Foreign Affairs, ministerial meeting of the North-Atlantic Council, 10 December 1996.
[24] Statement by Mr H. de Charette, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Atlantic Council, Brussels, 18 February 1997.
[25] See the consideration of the Russian policy towards the crises in Bosnia and Irak.
[26] For instance: visit by Mr H. Védrine to Moscow, 12 January 1999.
[27] Joint declaration by the Minister Delegate in charge of European Affairs, Mr Pierre Moscovici, and the Prime Minister of Lithuania, Mr Rolandas Paksas, the Minister Delegate's statements, Paris, 9 September 1999.
[28] Froment-Meurice Henri, Franchir le rubicond, in Jean-François Gribrinski (ed.), *L'Autriche, la Finlande, la Suède et la sécurité européenne* [Austria, Finland, Sweden and European security], Paris, La documentation française, 1996, p. 119.

Conclusions: The Northern Security Dimension

Gianni Bonvicini and Tapani Vaahtoranta

This book focuses on the northern enlargement of the EU and its impact on the Common Foreign and Security Policy. Its aim is to describe how the member states perceive the northern security dimension of the Union. What are the main security challenges in the north? What is their relative significance? What should be the role of the EU in addressing them? Security policy experts in each member country, with the exception of Luxembourg and Greece, set about answering these questions, making it possible to assess the prospects of the EU's security policy in the north.

It is evident that the EU gained a Northern Dimension when Finland and Sweden joined the Union in 1995. The enlargement to the north, like any enlargement in the past, broadened the agenda of the EU, and the Nordic members have been working within the Union to make their voices heard. If the three Baltic states are admitted to the EU, the significance of northern issues and the attitudes of the northern members will be increased further. The northern enlargement also impacts on the Common Foreign and Security Policy by bringing to the fore those concerns and perceptions which were considered a lower priority by the other EU countries.The Union has to deal with both traditional and soft security challenges in Northern Europe, while the characteristics of the security policies of the Nordic members also affect the policy making of the EU.

Not only does the enlargement impact on the Union and the CFSP, but the membership and the prospect of it influence the policy of new members and candidate countries. The clearest example, in our case, is provided by the development of the EU

in the security and defence fields. The Nordic members' security concerns have been challenged, right from the outset, by the acceleration of the EU's move towards closer security and defence co-operation. This was particularly true when discussions broached a possible merger of WEU with the Union, and the highly sensitive issue of the relationship between the EU and NATO. Finland and Sweden have reacted to this development in the area of crisis management (think of the 1997 Finnish-Swedish initiative on the Petersberg Tasks) while at the same time resisting the development of common defence, and maintaining military non-alignment.

The concept of "dimension" is used here to address the perceptions of security in the north. This term brings us back to the concept of "space", which was largely used (and abused) in the past by the supporters, in both academia and politics, of "geopolitics", a discipline that focused on the nation state's primary role to fix and enlarge its territorial scope and behaviour in the security field. In more recent times, during the Cold War period, it was common to speak in terms of "flanks", the Northern and Southern Flanks of NATO, to signify the unitarian character of the European collective defence effort against the lonely enemy of global dimension from the east, the Soviet Union. Geopolitics had then lost part of its meaning. So, is it being revived again today? To a certain extent the answer is yes, and geographical considerations, as we have seen in the individual chapters, are always present. But, in reality, as we read the chapters of this volume as a whole, the term dimension applies more to a political and psychological perception of security than to a mere geographical factor. And still, as we will see below, the presence of Russia, a globalising element in the perceptions of security, represents in itself the denial of the only geopolitical (and geographical) interpretation of northern security. It represents, in the end, more of a common European problem than a dividing issue.

Varying salience

Based on the national chapters presented in this book, it is evident that there exists within the EU no common view of the Union's northern security dimension and its significance. Instead, perceptions differ from one member country to another. Geography is one of the factors which explains the way security in the north is perceived in various parts of the EU. Based on the geographical proximity to Northern Europe and Russia, the member countries and their views of Northern European security can be divided into three groups.

First, it comes as no surprise that those countries which are located in Northern Europe – Finland, Sweden and Denmark – pursue well-developed policies on northern security and regard the northern security dimension of the EU as significant. Security explains the importance Finland attaches to the EU. Finland, which has a long common border with Russia, uses the Union as a tool to deal with its eastern neighbour. Even though Denmark is further away from Russia, she shares many of the Finnish concerns. In fact, Denmark has difficulties in finding anything new in the Finnish initiative on the Northern Dimension since the initiative is regarded as being so similar to the policies already being pursued by Copenhagen.

The second group consists of those members that have some contact with Northern Europe but which are located between North and South. Even though the public in those countries may not pay attention to Northern European security and even though Northern Europe is not a region of primary interest to these countries, their governments, nevertheless, have a policy on Russia and its role in European security. While the Netherlands, Austria, the UK, Germany and France share some of the concerns of the Nordic countries, they, however, tend to balance the northern agenda with the other security interests of the European Union, particularly those security challenges that

are in their more immediate vicinity. This is particularly true in the case of France where the Southern dimension of security appears on the horizon of the country's national interests

Third, the southern members – Portugal, Italy and Spain (and most probably Greece, too) – pay very little attention to Northern Europe. It is a "minor issue" in Spain and has "never been high on the agenda of Italy's foreign policy". Instead, the southern members emphasise the importance, as in the case of France, of the security issues in the Mediterranean region and are interested in bargaining with those who want to promote the northern security dimension within the EU. If the Union is to pay more attention to Northern European security, the Southern European member states should be compensated by having an equal increase in the attention paid to the Mediterranean. Ireland, too, finds herself both physically and psychologically distanced from Northern Europe and, consequently, has very little interest in the northern security agenda.

In short, instead of a common perception of the security in the north and of its significance for the CFSP, the neighbourhood zone of each member country still shapes its attitude. Those geographical regions and security challenges that are closest to a country receive more attention and are found to be more salient than the issues in more distant areas.

Russia as the key security concern

Though the level of interest in Northern European security varies within the EU, the member countries share the same view of Russia. It is generally recognised that, due to the presence of Russia, Northern European security has implications for European security as a whole. As a result of the Finnish membership, the European Union now has a long common border with Russia. The accession of Estonia, Latvia and

Lithuania would bring the EU and Russia into even closer direct contact with each other and would make Kaliningrad a Russian enclave in the EU. In short, what makes Northern Europe singular in comparison with other parts of the European Union is the presence of Russia. This has both traditional and soft security implications. Despite its current state of weakness, Russia has a vast territory, a large population and huge natural resources. Russia is also one of the nuclear powers of the world.

As for traditional security, Germany and France, for example, emphasise this wider significance of the Russian factor. Also, the presence of Russia is a major factor when it comes to explaining why Finland maintains her policy of military non-alignment, and it also shapes the Swedish policy on NATO membership.

Russia is not perceived as an immediate military threat since it is not regarded as having either the intention or the capability to militarily threaten members of the EU. However, the potential of Russia to pose a traditional security challenge not only to the Baltic states but also to Finland is recognised. The main problem is defined as the "uncertainty" about Russia's future development and behaviour. To avoid Russia posing a military threat in the future, the "stability" and democratisation within Russia and its participation in European co-operation are deemed to be significant. It is hoped that the EU could play an important role in achieving these goals. This approach appears rather unproblematic as long as the Russian perception of the European Union remains benevolent. If the Russian view changed, for example as a result of the bolstering of the EU's security policy, reconciling the security interests of the EU and the co-operative relationship with Russia could become more difficult.

The presence of Russia affects the way the Baltic states are joining the European economic, political and security co-operation and integration. The integration of the Baltic states into Europe is characterised by the Russian desire to keep

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania outside NATO and by the aim of the "West" not to damage its relations with Russia. Thus, while the EU aims at admitting the Baltic states, member countries want to proceed with the further enlargement in a way that does not alienate Russia. In general, all member countries are in favour of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania joining the Union (and perhaps also NATO) to strengthen their independence and security. Germany, in particular, feels a strong moral obligation towards the Baltic states due to the role she played in deciding the fate of the Baltics during the Second World War. However, there is little willingness to give any special status to the Baltic states. It is expected that they meet the political and economic criteria established by the European Council in order to join the Union. Some national preferences are discernible, though. Geographical proximity explains why Finland has been particularly interested in the membership of Estonia, and Italy is attracted by Lithuania because of the country's Catholic religion.

The issue of the EU enlargement raises the greater question of the future relations between the European Union and NATO and that of their role in European security. It is not yet clear what the implications will be if the enlargement processes proceed at different speeds and perhaps include different countries. One possible consequence is that the organisations, due to the differences in the enlargement, become more different from each other.

Russia's presence is equally important in the field of soft security since it is a major source of problems such as environmental degradation, organised crime and illegal migration. As for non-military threats to security, the environment is the only one that draws detailed attention. Besides the geographical proximity, the vulnerability to the pollutants transmitted by the sea currents in the Baltic Sea (Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Germany) and in the North Sea (the Netherlands, the UK and Ireland) explain the interest. The

inland members or those along the Mediterranean have less cause for concern. The main problems, according to those members expressing environmental concern, are the nuclear hazards in the Kola Peninsula created by the Soviet and Russian military and the safety of nuclear power plants in Russia and Lithuania. The focus on the environment implies that, to a certain extent, the concern about the military threat posed by Moscow has been replaced by the concern about the ecological impact of the military and civilian uses of nuclear energy in Russia.

Less concern about non-alignment

The military non-alignment of Sweden and Finland seems to cause less concern than at the time of their accession. It is understandable that these "neutrals", together with Austria and Ireland, do not perceive military non-alignment as the main obstacle to the development of the CFSP. On the one hand, they regard issues other than common defence as the most relevant ones in the development of the Union's security policy. On the other hand, it is worth remembering that other EU members have also objected to the transformation of the Union into a military alliance.

Of more interest is the fact that the attitude of some of the former critics has changed. Since France is not currently pushing for European collective defence, it is easier for Paris to tolerate military non-alignment within the Union and to emphasise the contribution by the non-aligned members to the development of the ESDP. The change in the Spanish attitude has to do with the fact that Spain now accepts the principle of variable geometry within the EU. Spain no longer expects every member country to proceed at the same speed in every sector of the integration. Italy seems to be the only one that is openly critical of the

security policies pursued by Finland and Sweden (and Denmark). The issue of military non-alignment within the EU may be further marginalised by the process initiated by the changes in the British and French policies toward the EU's security policy. If the process initiated at St. Malo gradually blurs the distinction between those members belonging to NATO and WEU and those members currently staying outside the military alliances, non-alignment may lose its meaning in the long run.

Importance of the common policy

To sum up, even though the attention paid to Northern European security varies within the Union, the salience of the northern security dimension is likely to be maintained by two factors. First, the presence of Russia will cause a continued security concern. Second, if the Baltic states join the Union, it will further increase the voice of the north in shaping the EU's security policy. Since Russia is not perceived as posing any immediate military threat and since there are no acute crises in the north, the concern about the environment has to a certain extent replaced the traditional security concern. Much depends now on the development in Russia. If the relations between Russia and the EU (or the Baltic states) worsened, the concern about traditional security would be likely to return.

These considerations lead us to two final remarks.

First, several authors reject the idea of "subregionalising" the CFSP. Even if geographical considerations of threat are still an important element in shaping national security priorities, the risk of detachment between the many dimensions of European security is considered negative. For example, even though countries like Spain and Italy emphasise the significance of southern security issues, they, at the same time, want to consider the northern and southern dimension as aspects of a common

European security policy. This attitude has to do not just with security considerations but with economic concerns, too. An excessive focus of the EU's policies and financial resources on the East and the North of Europe would weaken the perspective of a more consistent EU effort towards the Mediterranean. This attitude is reinforced by the perception of emerging security threats, both hard and soft, in that region and by the consideration that addressing these threats is a European responsibility and not just an issue for the countries of the South. As in the case of Russia, the Mediterranean and, in particular, the Middle East are regarded as globalising factors for the definition of the scope of a European security policy.

Second, the potential development of a common defence within the Union needs to be kept in mind. On the one hand, the presence of the Nordic members (and of their security choices) inside the Union is considered, by Italy in particular, as a major obstacle to the development of the defence posture of the Union. On the other hand, their presence represents an important element for reflecting carefully on the possible consequences of the EU bolstering its security and defence policy. The potential negative reaction of Russia, a country now bordering on the Union, has to be taken more seriously into consideration today than at the time of the last enlargement, when similar problems were less stringent. A solution to this question is far from being reached, but it is clear that with the entry of a northern security dimension inside the Union the issue of Russia and its relationship with the Union becomes a crucial item on the ESDP agenda.

In conclusion it can be said that the northern security dimension, if carefully considered in its European character, can be an important element in settling security issues in Europe. The editors of this book would like to contribute to a serious debate on this topic.

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The Northern EU

National Views on the Emerging Security Dimension

This book focuses on the northern enlargement of the EU and its impact on the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The EU gained a Northern Dimension when Finland and Sweden joined the Union in 1995. This enlargement to the North, like any enlargement in the past, broadened the agenda of the EU, and the Nordic members have been working within the Union to make their voices heard. How do the member states perceive the Northern Security Dimension of the Union? What are the main challenges in the North? What is their relative significance? What should the role of the EU be in addressing them? These questions are answered by security policy experts from the member states..

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