

IAI9043

SOUTHERN EUROPE IN A CHANGING GLOBAL DIMENSION
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paper presented at the IEEI Tenth Anniversary Conference
«European Stability at a Time of Change»
Lisbon, November 8-10, 1990

Towards a new security architecture in Europe

Western countries are pursuing two most urgent objectives in reaction to the sweeping changes in Eastern Europe and the USSR. First, Eastern Europe and the USSR must be helped to accomplish their transition to political pluralism and a market economy. If this transformation is not successfully carried out, serious forms of destabilization will affect Eastern Europe and the USSR and will spread to the Western countries. Thus, the first objective is the international integration of the Eastern countries. The second objective is the prevention of a nationalistic evolution of the Greater Germany and the other West and East European countries following the political and security changes now occurring in Europe.

In order to attain these two objectives, three policies are being contemplated by the Atlantic allies and the other West European countries. First, the EC must be deepened and reinforced to prevent nationalist drives in Western Europe, to help direct the Eastern European democratic transition and to aid economic reconstruction in both Eastern Europe and the USSR. Second, a significant American presence must be maintained in Europe, and the Euro-American relationship must be carefully preserved to prevent nationalist developments in Europe, to reassure the USSR with respect to European powers and viceversa. Third, the countries formerly belonging to the two blocs -together with the neutral and non-aligned European countries- must establish a collective security framework. This framework is identified as a «new CSCE». It would be more or less institutionalized, but would remain strictly inter-governmental rather than becoming multilaterally integrated like NATO or the EC.

Though these three policies are largely shared by Western European countries, there are important differences in emphases and visions with respect to their final outcomes. It can be said that governments are envisaging two principal comprehensive arrangements.

First, within the pan-European security framework provided by the «new CSCE», NATO and the EC would need to be adapted and reinforced if they are to remain the pole of stability and orientation of the whole process underway. The

EC is expected to be deepened at both political and security levels. This reinforced EC would represent the Europeans within NATO. In NATO and/or elsewhere, the USA and the EC will set in motion a closer relation for sharing political and economic decisions. In other words, the new security order would rest on the renewal of the Euro-American relationship and the strengthening of the EC. They would add a more pronounced and cooperative political dimension to NATO's military dimension (this would be the meaning of NATO's becoming a «more political» body).

Second, the new pan-European CSCE framework would suffice in itself to perform the task of giving security to the countries concerned, «from Vladivostok to S. Francisco». A major role of the present Western institutions would probably be helpful in directing and guaranteeing the transition to this collective pan-European security arrangement. However, once this «new CSCE» is in place, the absence of a dominating pole would be a condition for its success. In this «scenario» the more or less gradual enlargement of the EC to the whole of Europe is more important than its deepening.

The key-factor in determining which arrangement will emerge is the deepening of EC integration. There is no doubt that the Western governments are about to renew the pan-European CSCE process with the aim of arriving at the first kind of arrangement. However, if in the meantime they do not manage to deepen the political and security levels of the EC, NATO will become a «more diluted» body (that is how «more political» is interpreted by the «new CSCE» supporters) and the «new CSCE» arrangement will prevail beyond and despite the will and expectations of Western Governments.

The «new CSCE» vision expresses the widespread feeling that with the collapse of the Soviet threat the military dimension of the Western network is no longer necessary. Consequently, NATO should either disappear or transform itself into a «political» entity (in the sense of «diluted»), whose main task would be that of providing the rationale for a continued association of the North American countries to the CSCE theatre. By the same token, the necessity for a deepening of the EC institutions from the security point of view is opposed as it is considered senseless.

Despite good intentions, the fundamentally insecure character of the «new CSCE» framework is inherent in its inability to provide the political prerequisites to security. The success of the CSCE has been made possible by the political cohesion and the multilateral organization of its member countries. It was this underlying political structure that enabled the CSCE to succeed and not the other way round. If the «new CSCE» is not sustained by an effective and integrated political entity within it (i.e. the continued stability of the Euro-American pole) the result will be the familiar system of nation states, wherein sooner or later the most powerful ones would try to dominate the others and security would be provided by the old, unstable policies of the «balance of power» and bilateral «alliances». In other words, there is no doubt that the «new CSCE» arrangement does not have the political prerequisites for being effective in providing the expected security.

Southern European security and Western institutions

The implication of what has been just said is that the Western countries - and all the other countries concerned- share an interest in the stability of the Western institutional network as it will affect the stability of the entire system. This Western interest, however, is particularly intense for the South European countries (SECs).

Belonging to the Western institutional network is of special significance for the stability and identity of the SECs. External security is not the only motivation for their participation in the network. Various events over the course of this century have put Southern Europe in a marginal position, with relatively weak political and economic institutions in comparison to those of other European countries. This relative international weakness, however, is in sharp contrast with the significant historical legacy of these countries, creating intense frustration. This led in the first part of this century to the rise of aggressive nationalist regimes, determined to assert their power. Thus, membership in the Western institutional network is important because by participating in Atlantic and European institutions Southern European countries are no longer relegated to a marginal role and have the means for asserting themselves without resorting to nationalism. With this in mind, it is understandable that the SECs have a paramount interest in the maintenance of the solidarity and strength of the Western institutions. The possible weakening of these institutions would affect the international security of South European and other Western countries. In the case of SECs, however, it may also affect their new democratic identity.

In other words, the inclusion of the SECs in the Western community prevents them from feeling marginalized or isolated. As peripheral and marginal as they may be within the Western system, thanks to the status they enjoy as members of the Western institutions, and particularly as members of the EC, they are not at all marginal internationally. Consequently, the weakening of the Western system would make the SECs more marginal than they may be today. This marginalization would lead to frustration and nationalist policies.

Western European policies in the current transition

The ultimate direction of Western countries in the current transition is not very clear, though officially they aim to achieve the first arrangement, i.e. a comprehensive East-West security framework stabilized by effective Western institutions.

To evaluate Western directions, it may be helpful to look at Western substantive policies at the current stage, a stage that will conclude with the German elections and unification and that can be considered decisive for the next stage, when the European architecture will actually begin to take shape.

Today, it is the «Two plus Four» group that is leading the process toward the new architecture. The issue is the task and the future of the «Two plus Four» formula. It may act as the liquidator in the aftermath of the Second World War and then disappear; in contrast, it may evolve as a sort of regional «Security

Council» which would include the Greater Germany, the UK, France and the two superpowers.

Such a development would be consistent with the «new CSCE» arrangement and would inevitably downgrade the existing Western institutional setting to one based on nation-states similar to that prevailing before the Second World War. This would be particularly harmful for the SECs. When the group was announced in Ottawa (February 1990) there were protests, especially on behalf of Italy, because only a few months before, the two European Councils organized under the French presidency in Paris and Strasbourg had stipulated that the EC countries were expected to have a role in the German unification process. Consequently, the SECs felt excluded; such developments may, in fact, contribute to their isolation.

A second feature of the current phase is seen in the national foreign policies of West European countries as crucial as the UK and France. Confronted with the drive towards German unification, both agreed in principle on the policy of welcoming it, provided that it takes place within the framework of Western institutions. At the same time, however, they have shown deep mistrust toward this policy and acted accordingly. Strenuously opposed to any deepening of the EC, the British government considers the linking of this process with that of German unification futile and foolish. It has overtly manifested its aversion to the unification of the two Germanys, though in the end it felt that it was unavoidable to «be nice to the Germans» (1).

The French attitude is more contorted, oblique and also more alarming, given that the special solidarity between France and the FRG is supposed to be the centerpiece of the EC political understanding. The French government, though officially supporting the unification, has repeatedly acted as though it had to contain the new Greater Germany by allying itself with the European countries and the USSR (2). In this way it was not only unfair to Bonn but also to the EC, to which France had proposed and promised to «contain» Germany by the enforcement of a stronger European integration.

A third feature is the weakness of the drive toward the strengthening of the European integration, although this policy is recognized as crucial by all the countries concerned. It may appear that this is not the case because of the two intergovernmental conferences on monetary and political integration that are meant to start at the end of 1990. As successful as these conferences may be, what is clearly missing among the EC members is the belief that the EC and its deepening is central to the future architecture «from Vladivostok to S. Francisco». This can be easily supported by the substantive policies of France and the UK. In addition, it is supported by the existing opposition or reservations with respect to the necessity of developing a common European security and defense policy.

At the London Atlantic Council in July 1990, Americans appeared more innovative than Europeans on this point. Americans envision a NATO transformed by the growing security role the EC is expected to play within the enlarged security system that will link East and West (3). Consequently, they

expect the EC to be reinforced by the addition of a common defense and security policy to its institutional dimensions. But such a development, when not directly opposed, is envisioned by the Europeans only in a very distant future. An EC reinforced only at the economic level will neither lead to innovations in the Euro-American relationship within NATO, nor contribute to a security system that is more multilateral and stable than the one which is promised by the «new CSCE». The EC countries risk moving toward a «new CSCE» system not because they wish it but because they are unwilling to reinforce their common institutions.

Southern European policies

What distinguishes the SECs (and, generally speaking, the other EC members) in relation to France and the UK is their more straightforward and sincere interest in deepening the EC. This objective, however, is not receiving the urgency and priority it would deserve in relation to the other objectives at stake. The working out of a «new NATO» and a «new CSCE» are being dealt with by their diplomacies as if the political relevance these «new» bodies are destined to acquire were separated from the future of the EC. The EC future is de-emphasized and detached from the other institutions that are meant to assure European security.

There are various reasons for this policy. As in the other members of the EC, public opinion in the SECs places major importance on the opportunity of institutionalizing the peace that is finally at hand and cashing in the «dividends of peace». To this end, establishing a «new CSCE» and downgrading the military nature of NATO to an unspecified «more political» alliance are more attractive than the deepening of the EC (not to mention the addition of security and defense competences). Governments tend to be cautious on the issue of downgrading NATO and more skeptical about the «new CSCE». However, their attitudes are more conservative (how to prevent integrated military forces from simply being dismantled, how to adapt nuclear military doctrines, how to convince public opinion that the USSR is still a threatening factor, etc.) than innovative (how to give the EC a new role within NATO and which pan-European security system might be implemented). Whatever the governments' attitudes, internal consensus requires that priority be given to the search for a form of security like that promised by the «new CSCE».

This is particularly evident in Italy, where prospects for a «new CSCE» give stability to the government coalition and to its relations with the opposition. A government policy overtly supporting a pan-European security system based on the dominance of Western institutions would split the majority and create solidarities with the opposition through the government coalition itself and the Christian Democratic party.

A more straightforward policy of the SECs, towards the strengthening of the Western institutions may also be prevented by Spanish-like attitudes toward NATO. The Spanish membership in NATO was not motivated by a shared perception of the threat from the East, but by the necessity of integrating Spain into the Western circle and giving the country its due international status.

Promises about retaining full national sovereignty have conditioned electoral consensus on Spain's membership in NATO. This resulted in Spain's limited membership in the military organization. An evolution toward a «more political» (in the sense of a «more diluted») alliance would therefore be consistent with the fundamental Spanish feelings about NATO. A similar attitude could also develop in the Greek government. Again, this is not to say that Spain and Greece will put forward a policy of downgrading NATO. Their particular feelings about NATO, however, could contribute to giving priority to more comfortable schemes (like that of the «new CSCE») than to the reinforcement and renewal of the Western institutions.

The foregoing does not constitute a common SEC position on the changing European security architecture. Apart from the cases of France and the UK -dominated by the problem of asserting their national dimension- the policies of EC members in Southern Europe and elsewhere, do not differ significantly. With some reservations, everyone is ready to initiate a «new CSCE», even though progress on NATO and the EC is still uncertain and unclear. What must be pointed out here is that there is, however, a difference with respect to the prospects. A relative weakening of the EC in a European setting shaped by national evolutions, «alliance policies» and more or less formalized directorates (such as the one that may arise from the «Two plus Four» group) would put the SECs, particularly Italy and Spain, in a very marginal situation. The «voice» the SECs have within the EC today would not be comparable in a similar position within a landscape marked by national actors. The same would be true if NATO were weakened.

If one considers this special SEC interest in maintaining the strength and cohesion of Western institutions, their propensity to follow the general drive towards the «new CSCE» kind of arrangement is not the only cause for concern. What is perhaps more worrying is their inability or unwillingness to promote more integrative policies within the EC. One must recognize that the SECs and Italy in particular have carried out a clever diplomacy within the existing initiatives for upgrading integration. For example, Italy played a remarkable role in advancing the plans for implementing a European monetary and economic union, and there is no doubt that the Italian presidency during the second semester of 1990 will do its best to ensure the success of the two intergovernmental conferences on the EC agenda. As clever and effective as they may be within the circle of Community politics, major SECs such as Italy and Spain are weak or absent from the circle of intergovernmental relations among the core EC countries. They tend to feel excluded from them; nevertheless, they make no attempt to join in. French-German initiatives should not only be supported (or rejected); they should be shared and «Europeanized». Given the generally recognized importance of linking Germany to the EC in the present political stage, this would be helpful for at least two reasons: strengthening the linkage policy towards Germany and making French policy less oblique.

By the same token, the French policy of using bilateral relations to differentiate the roles of its EC partners while sharing these roles should be

rejected. France cooperates with the UK on nuclear arms, with the FRG on East-West relations and with Italy and Spain on the Mediterranean area. The SECs have no interest in being compartmentalized. On the contrary, their interest is in having all issues reported at the EC level. In this framework the initiatives carried out by France, Spain and Italy with respect to the Western Mediterranean and by Italy with respect to Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia, though good in themselves, should be to some extent «Europeanized». If they are not, they will prove less effective and even counterproductive in terms of Western European solidarity.

A more active intergovernmental European policy from the SECs could be a positive balancing act with respect to the inevitability» and the ambiguities of the current generalized course towards a pan-European security scheme.

The West and threats coming from the South

Things are also changing south of the European continent. The occupation of Kuwait by Iraq in August 1990 was not a surprising development. It is quite in step with changes and evolutions which began to emerge in the war between Iraq and Iran. Under the impetus of the Gulf war, many countries south of Europe set up huge armaments arsenals, enhanced their force projection capabilities and acquired a valuable capacity for reproducing and expanding their arsenal through their new military industries.

These new developments have been occurring just as the USSR seems to be withdrawing from the Middle East (and from regional crises in general). The East-West dimension no longer seems to be a constraint on the role of the West in regional crises, giving the West more freedom, but also greater responsibility. The increased regional instability will bring about an accentuated «internazionalization» of regional crises (a process distinct from previous risks of East-West «globalization»). The consequence will be that the Western countries and the USA will be increasingly called in to provide stability, with the USSR assuming a low profile.

This has been the case with the Iraq-Kuwait crisis. This crisis has demonstrated that because of instability South of Europe there are some limits southward to Western policies of withdrawing and disarmament now being negotiated and implemented on an East-West axis. The USA and the West cannot simply neglect regional crises in the Middle East and will continue to be obliged to intervene, especially in the Middle East. This is definitely a major problem with economic and financial repercussions.

In this perspective, threats from the South may have an important role in the reshaping of Western security institutions that is taking place along East-West lines. A stronger West European solidarity -expressed by the inclusion of security in the deepening of the EC- would allow for two favourable, not mutually exclusive, developments. First, the Europeans would be able to handle regional crises themselves, without the need for an American leadership to coordinate multi-national interventions. Second, an integrated European military pole would make it easier for NATO to be adapted to intervene in what is presently out of its

area. This kind of evolution would therefore facilitate efforts directed at reinforcing Western institutions within the reshaping that is taking place as a result of East-West changes.

The possibility of adapting NATO to the new security environment by including «out-of-area» operations in its scope was hinted at during the July 1990 Atlantic Council in London. This would be achieved by setting up special multinational forces on-call, characterized by high mobility. A similar idea aired by the Secretary-General of the WEU, though in reference to European deployments, could be redirected and expanded to create a European solidarity for the same purpose.

In the absence of integrative European developments in security, however, it will be difficult for the USA to decrease its role in the Middle East significantly. It may be that their presence in the Mediterranean will be decreased by holding ships on call in the Atlantic, so that they could move to the Mediterranean and the Middle East as soon as needed (4). But any major crisis in the Middle East would require facilities and agreements with the SECs and in order to move troops and matériel -- as is the case in Germany today. Basing in the SECs is already a thorny issue today (5). It will not be easier in the framework of weakening Western institutional solidarity that is implicit in the developments in question. In any case, the European inability to make an effective contribution in defusing crises in the Middle East would contribute to the estrangement of the USA from the European theater as well. All these developments would be consistent with a «new CSCE» scenario within the East-West framework.

When taking account of these considerations, threats from the South appear well linked to the rearrangement of Western security institutions. It is not just a way to substitute the waning threat from the Communist world in order to restore NATO's raison d'être. Threat from the South is a real issue within the framework of Euro-American relations and is destined to enter the next Western security equation.

Threats from the South and Southern Europe

In relation to this growing threat from out of the NATO area, West European countries rejected USA requests aimed at enlarging the tasks of NATO beyond its present jurisdiction, so as to include threats from the South in addition to Warsaw Pact threats to the NATO Southern Flank (6). At the same time, despite agreements in principle reflected in the 1987 «Platform on European Security» approved in 1987 by the WEU Council of Ministers, there were no substantive developments within the West European institutions (including the WEU, EC and EPC) in relation to the advancement of a common responsibility in the field of security and defense. It must be noted that France and Italy -two major countries on the Southern rim of Western Europe- at the time of the multinational intervention in the Gulf opposed a more integrative evolution of the West European forces at sea.

The consequence of this evolution in relation to the management of the threat from the South has been that on a number of occasions the USA acted in

the Southern theater by using bases and forces more or less integrated into NATO according to US interests and decisions, i.e. by changing «hats». Because of the increase in the USA missions nationally operated against threats from the South and the absence of any collective development on European side the SECs have been involved on a bilateral basis by the American activism in the Mediterranean and the neighbouring regions. This involvement has created conflicts between the USA and the SECs, which have been isolated (i.e. «singularized») from other allies in these conflicts.

What could be the impact of current changes in East-West and Euro-American relations on this situation?

If a «new CSCE» scenario were to prevail, the general weakening of the Western institutional cohesion in a Southern environment marked by growing threats would lead to the accentuation of current tendencies toward «bilateralism» between the SECs and the USA. The new environment would be characterized by national tendencies in the SECs -as everywhere in Europe- and, as we have already argued, by a likely necessity for the USA and other Western powers to intervene in the Middle East. Intervention would be on a mostly individual or multi-national basis (i.e. outside an integrated military organization). This would reinforce «bilateralism» between USA -and possibly other Western powers- and the SECs. Without a multilateral arrangement, the combination of growing threats in the Southern regions with more assertive, nationalist SECs will increase the likelihood of conflicts among the SECs and with the USA and would make nationalism in the SECs stronger.

An evolution towards the strengthening of Western institutions would have a different result, especially if such a strengthening were substantiated by new institutional solidarities for operating jointly in the «out-of-area».

This would be of extreme importance from the point of view of the SECs. To what we have already said when talking about the impact of threats from the South on Western institutions, one has to add that both NATO and the EC are definitely giving more weight to Eastern Europe and the USSR than to Southern areas. Despite the EC countries' agreement on the implementation of concentric circles around the EC core involving EFTA, Mediterranean and Eastern European countries, the risk of imbalances in the external relations of the EC as a result of the German unification cannot be ruled out. A concentration on the East would not be a good policy for the EC and for the West in general. It would definitely be damaging to the SECs. Damages would not be caused by their greater exposure to threats coming from the South in comparison to their partners. Rather, the exclusion of the South from the Western multilateral notion of security would put the SECs back into the situation of «singularization» previously mentioned i.e. they would be less integrated in the Western network, potentially marginal to it and vulnerable to nationalist tendencies.

When talking about changes in the East-West dimension, the conclusion was that SECs have a particular interest in the maintenance of stability in the Western institutional network. This conclusion is confirmed by the discussion on threats coming from the South. In relation to the latter, however, what is also

of interest to the SECs is that the Southern dimension be firmly included in the new notion of security that is meant to sustain the reshaping of the Western institutional network.

Notes

* This is a preliminary version of a paper the author is preparing within the framework of an international research project on «The Role and Prospects of Southern European Security in a changing European Environment». The research project is carried out by the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI, Rome) in cooperation with the Hellenic Foundation for Defense and Foreign Policy (Eliamep, Athens) and the Instituto de Estudos Estratégicos e Internacionais (IEEI, Lisbon). The Ford Foundation made a generous contribution towards the implementation of the project.

(1) «What the PM learnt about the Germans», The Independent, July 15, 1990, p. 19, that reports a British Government's internal memorandum about changes in Germany.

(2) See Pierre Lellouche, «Lendemain de fête ou comment ne pas manquer notre sortie de Yalta», Politique Internationale, 47, Printemps 1990, pp. 1-28.

(3) After Secretary Baker's proposal at the Berlin Press Club in December 1989 to create an organic form of political cooperation between the USA and the EC, other proposals did come from American personalities, like Henry Kissinger («Una sedia per gli Usa alla tavola dei Dodici», La Stampa, May 30, 1990) and Stanley Hoffman («From Old Nato to a New North Atlantic Security Structure», International Herald Tribune, May 29, 1990). Europeans appear less propositive.

(4) See Bradford Dismukes, Mare mosso, Center for Naval Analysis,

(5) Gene R. Larocque, «Estados Unidos y el Mediterraneo», Revista Española de Defensa, May 1990, p.81.

(6) Geoffrey Edwards, «Multilateral Coordination of Out-of-Area Activities», in Joseph I. Coffey, Gianni Bonvicini (eds.), The Atlantic Alliance and the Middle East, MacMillan Press, 1989, pp. 227-267.