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**RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN INTERNATIONAL  
SECURITY INSTITUTIONS**

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After the fall of the Berlin Wall Western countries chose to stick to the principle that the maintenance and strengthening of their cooperation within an articulated institutional framework was a key condition to avoid a renationalization of the security policies of the individual countries.

There were two main causes for concern: first, that the collapse of the Eastern bloc could result in the dissolution of the cement that had until then kept the Western countries together; second, that the resurgence of rivalries and conflicts among the Central and Eastern European countries could lead to a return to the old balance-of-power games. These risks have so far been largely avoided thanks to the common decision to preserve the institutional *acquis*, while trying to create a network of cooperation links with the former communist states in an effort to project stability eastwards.

The other central idea by which the Western countries have been inspired is that European security needs a plurality of institutions, because none has the capacity to deal with the new challenges alone. It has been stressed, especially within NATO, that each of the existing institutions has its specific contribution to make for the establishment of a new security order in Europe. According to this view, the broader concept of security needed in the new geo-strategic environment cannot be implemented through a single institutional solution; instead, it requires a system of interlocking and mutually reinforcing institutions, to use the official jargon.

However, the proliferation of institutional bodies and tools which have been developed in the last few years is clearly far from immune to difficulties and drawbacks. The unnecessary and wasteful duplication of structures is only the most evident risk. Moving from an analysis of the behaviour of the Western countries during the Yugoslav crisis, Henry Kissinger, warned against the risk that the multiplication of institutions with competences in the security field can contribute to rising nationalism because they «provide a menu to any country to choose whatever institution most favors its immediate national goals on any given issue»\*\*. Other analysts have argued that there is simply no room for all the existing institutions. According to this view, institutional darwinism leading to the survival of the fittest competitor, is both unavoidable, at least in the longer run, and advisable.

Yet, if one looks back to the developments which have occurred in the institutional field since 1989, he must recognize that any idea of a drastic simplification of the institutional structures has proven to be unfeasible.

First of all, the proposal to replace the institutions inherited from the Cold War with a single pan-European security structure - to be implemented possibly through an institutionalization of the CSCE - lost its attractiveness very early, after having enjoyed some popularity in the months following the fall of the wall. Both the Western countries - especially the traditionally more pro-Atlantic ones - and the old allies of the Soviet Union considered the pan-European context too broad and not sufficiently consolidated to be reliable and all the more to become the centre of the new security architecture.

Second, the emergence of a European pole of defense as an alternative to

NATO, at least for some functions, was also ruled out very early. The main concern from which this idea arose was a rapid US disengagement from its role as military power in Europe. This concern, however, proved to be largely unfounded, although the problem clearly remains - and could become more acute in the future - of a fairer sharing of financial burdens and political responsibilities among the Western allies.

Third - and this point is clearly related to the previous one - the idea of assigning the crucial political functions, especially those connected with dialogue and cooperation with Eastern countries, to the European Community through the transformation of NATO into a merely military institution has proved unviable. It would indeed imply an unnatural separation of the military from the political aspects of security. The problem the Western countries are dealing with today is the establishment of effective mechanisms of political consultation and cooperation between the US and Canada, on the one hand, and the European Union, on the other.

Fourth, the experience of the recent crises and conflicts in Europe has shown that the old prejudice against an active involvement of the United Nations in crisis prevention and crisis management activities on the European soil had to be rejected. The Yugoslav crisis, in particular, has underlined that the United Nations has a crucial role to play not only as a legitimizing institution, but also as an operational instrument in the fields of peacekeeping (in the broader sense of the word) and diplomacy.

This is not to say that the current institutional structure does not need to be subject to measures of rationalization and simplification. Duplications and overlappings of functions are evident both within the individual institutions and between them. But, on the basis of the experience of the last few years, it must be stressed that there is no easy solution to this problem. Drastic cuts in the institutional machinery could ultimately create more problems than those it would solve. The catchword of «interlocking institutions», therefore, maintains its validity. The problem is how it has to be implemented to ensure the maximum of effectiveness and the minimum waste of time and resources.

I shall concentrate here on some crucial problems which are at the centre of the current debate.

One of the most controversial issue concerns the new initiatives to be undertaken to integrate the Central and Eastern European countries into the Western institutional framework. So far, two main concerns have prompted NATO countries to rule out an enlargement of membership to the old enemies of the Cold War or the granting of formal security guarantees to them. First, there is the fear that if NATO were enlarged only to the countries of Central Europe, this could provoke a change in Moscow's security and defense policy towards an anti-Western attitude. There is a concrete risk of undermining the partnership links which have so far been established with Russia and which represent a crucial condition for the maintenance of stability in Europe. The West cannot afford to overlook the security concerns of a country which is almost completely surrounded by hot spots and which has a huge nuclear arsenal at its disposal. Second, the Western countries fear that with an enlargement of NATO towards the East they could be directly involved in intractable disputes and conflicts - especially ethnic ones - which could also concern borders.

For these reasons, in the next summit, to be held in January, NATO is expected to confirm its policy excluding additional membership for the time being. The strengthening of cooperation with the new democracies is likely to be based on the «partnership for peace» concept put forward by the Clinton administration which calls for closer and enlarged consultation. The North-Atlantic Cooperation Council has to be substantially reinforced through a stronger institutional supervision of its activities, with concentration on some key areas, such as crisis management and

peacekeeping. These areas are clearly the most relevant for the future of NATO, which has declared its readiness to make available its assets and expertise for peacekeeping operations under the aegis of the CSCE and the United Nations. In this regard the need is also felt for a revision of the new strategic concept approved by the alliance in 1991 which still considered territorial defense as the primary task for NATO. It must be stressed that there are still some significant political obstacles and practical difficulties to a restructuring of the forces which fully takes into account these new tasks. In any case, what will be excluded is the transformation of NATO into a pan-European security organization or into a sort of military arm of the CSCE. NATO will continue to follow the policy to decide whether or when to make available its capabilities on a case-by-case basis.

In the field of crisis management and peacekeeping as well as peace enforcement it is also of vital importance to establish a more effective complementarity between NATO and the Western European Union. In the last two years, important measures have been taken to ensure greater mutual transparency between the two institutions, on the basis of the program unveiled at the Maastricht summit. A set of new procedures and mechanisms has been established. The conditions have thus been created for a climate of mutual confidence. Useful experience was gained in connection with the Yugoslav crisis. Particularly worth mentioning is the decision to create a joint command for the implementation of the Security Council's resolutions concerning the sanctions against Serbia. But effective arrangements and procedures are also required to deal with situations in which the North-American allies do not want to intervene and which involve important European interests. It must be recalled that several members of the Clinton administration have recently made it clear that the US would participate in future peacekeeping operations only if its vital interests are at stake. The WEU countries have thus called for an agreement whereby NATO can decide to place its military means and other assets at the disposal of the WEU for operations in which the US does not want to become involved.

Since the last extraordinary EC Council there have also been the conditions to implement the provisions of the WEU declaration approved at the Maastricht summit concerning the relationship between the WEU and the Political Union. The WEU activities can now become an integral part of the security policy of the Political Union. There is now indeed the need to develop an effective complementarity between the Common Foreign Security Policy and the WEU. A key role could be played in this context by the Consultation Forum, which continues to develop as an instrument of dialogue and cooperation between the WEU member states and some Eastern countries in the security field. A positive experience was gained with the support given by the WEU to Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary for the application of the embargo against Serbia over the Danube. Worth mentioning is also the proposal put forward by the foreign ministers of France and Germany that the WEU should offer an associate status for the countries of Central Europe which already have an association agreement with the European Union. The third dimension in which the WEU can offer a specific contribution is the political relaunching of the European cooperation in the field of armaments. This cooperation, which is promoted by the Western European Armament Group, is the only way to face successfully the growing decrease in national resources devoted to defense.

An ambitious programme concerning conflict prevention and management, based on a plurality of instruments and institutions, was also approved at the last CSCE Helsinki Summit. The specific contribution of the CSCE is the effort to establish, at the institutional and operational levels, a closer and more effective link

between the human dimension activities and the conflict prevention ones. The experience of the most recent conflicts in Europe has indeed demonstrated that the protection of human rights is often closely connected with the security issues. The key concept which was established in Helsinki is that a systematic control of the respect of human rights can significantly contribute to the prevention of conflicts, in particular the internal conflicts. In fact, some internal conflicts arise from flagrant and repeated violations of some fundamental human rights. The institutional restructuring of the CSCE decided at the Helsinki summit has led to a strengthening of the instruments and mechanisms to ensure the connection between the human and the security dimensions.

Since Helsinki there has been a multiplication of the CSCE missions in several areas of Europe. These missions, however, have had an insignificant influence on the evolution of the various crises. What is essential is that the blatant contradiction between the CSCE institutional structure, which tends towards uncontrollable proliferation, and its still extremely limited operational capabilities be solved. If it were to persist, it could gradually erode the broad political consensus that the CSCE has enjoyed to date and which is vital for its future. On the whole, the decisions made at Helsinki worsened rather than contributed to solving the problem of the excessive dispersion of competences and instruments among the CSCE bodies. At the coming Review Conference in Budapest, action will have to be taken towards a functional reorganization and simplification of the CSCE institutional structure. Some progress in this direction was made at the recent Rome meeting of the Council, but it is still clearly insufficient. In any case, after Helsinki, the tendency to use the CSCE more for early warning and crisis prevention than for actual crisis management was confirmed. The CSCE functions in the field of peacekeeping, in particular, are destined to remain largely hypothetical, given the strict conditions to which the implementation of CSCE peacekeeping missions have been made subject. The CSCE lacks both the operational capacities and the appropriate decision-making procedures to play an effective role in crisis management.

The last point I want to deal with briefly is the cooperation between the European regional organizations and the United Nations in the field of peacekeeping. Both the potentialities and difficulties inherent in this relationship emerged during the Yugoslav crisis. Apart from the no-fly zone mission and the air protection of the UNPROFOR troops, NATO had cooperation with the United Nations in the planning process for the application of the aborted Vance-Owen peace plan. Relevant problems emerged concerning the sharing of responsibilities for command and control. These problems, however, do not seem insoluble, especially in situations which are less compromised than the Yugoslav crisis.

UN peacekeeping has undergone a striking quantitative growth. In the meantime, however, there has not been an increase in the resource base for funding peacekeeping, nor the necessary improvement of the management structure and of the procedures for the operations, apart from the adoption of some minor reform initiatives. As a result, the UN system for peacekeeping seems to be rapidly approaching a breaking point. Peacekeeping in Europe will therefore have to rely increasingly on the contributions of regional organizations. Furthermore, one cannot rule out that a change in the political climate within the Security Council could lead the UN to a new period of paralysis.

On the other hand, a clear advantage the UN enjoys over regional organizations is its greater prestige and legitimacy. Regional organizations can be perceived as not impartial enough. For this reason, their intervention in a crisis or conflict is often opposed by the parties involved. With its legitimating action, the UN

could alleviate this problem, but only to a limited extent. An emblematic case is the refusal in the early 1991 by both Serbs and Croats of the deployment of an EC-sponsored interposition force in Croatia, though they later accepted the deployment of a UN contingent with the same function.

European security will certainly continue to be based on a plurality of institutions. This institutional pluralism is far from exempt from inconveniences and shortcomings. On the other hand, it offers some political flexibility which should not be underestimated.

In any case, there are many aspects of the relationship between the various institutions which need to be clarified to achieve a greater complementarity and a more effective division of labour.

In the field of crisis management the concept of complementarity has to be accomplished, in particular, between NATO and the WEU. Furthermore, the WEU should become an integral instrument of the CFSP of the European Union which is hopefully now back on the right track.

Given its main characteristics, the CSCE seems to have the ability to act in the fields of early warning and preventive diplomacy. This specialization of the CSCE should be further promoted, making the most of the original linkage it is trying to establish between the human dimension and conflict prevention.

The United Nations will probably have a limited, but not negligible, role to play in Europe. Its main function will be the legitimation of action carried out by regional organizations, but it could also continue to have an operational role especially in situations where a strict impartiality is required.