

*Securing the benefits of globalisation • Part I, Chapter II***Conducted
by****Catherine Distler (PROMETHEE) and
Elisabeth Achmanian (Unisys)***Strategic
conversation
with***Rear Admiral (ret) Jean Dufourcq**
*Chief Academic Research Branch,
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the paradigm shift**

Defence is a field with longstanding global preoccupations. One needs only to remember the two World Wars and the Cold War. However, at the present stage of global economic integration, the threat is more diffuse, more global and harder to locate geographically. Many still nevertheless suppose that States can adequately secure their citizens. What are the implications of how this threat has changed?

Jean Dufourcq: It is true that people now feel threatened by a number of groups that escape the control of any State, and which subsequently challenge the relevance of the traditional defence paradigm. We are facing a dangerous paradox, a disconnection between security of States and security of citizens. Since States are no longer threatened as States, people feel that they are no longer secure in their everyday lives, because of non-traditional threats and non-state opponents.

In practice, I believe we need to fulfil a *paradigm shift*: security can no longer be the result of a given defence policy, as it was in the past. The nature of the threat has changed; we need to move from the notion of 'danger' to the notion of 'vulnerability', from 'threat' to 'risk'. Danger is linked to something from the

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outside, which can be named, designated and known, whereas vulnerability is something that exists in oneself, comparable to fragility. Indeed, vulnerability should be the key concept around which to organise our thinking.

Thinking in terms of danger or vulnerability generates totally different attitudes. In the first case, the classical answer would be trying to gain superiority over the opponent – it is an old war principle in which safety derives from superiority in force – whilst in the second case, the risk being blurrier, it is necessary to identify one's own weaknesses and vulnerabilities and to eventually purge them so as to prevent someone else from taking advantage of, or stressing them. In terms of its strength, the link between 'risk' and 'vulnerability' can be compared to that between 'danger' and 'threat'.

Most Western Europeans would tend to agree with you and consider that foreigners are no longer a threat either to their country or their individual security. But is this sentiment universal? It certainly doesn't seem to be...

JD: To be frank, this feeling is not even shared by all EU citizens: inhabitants of the Finnish or Baltic States still think about Russia as a possible threat, a conviction certainly not held by the French or Portuguese. The latter cannot understand the resentment felt by the former. Hence security resolution differs by country because the problems each faces are incomparable.

However, all EU citizens aspire to live within a prosperous and stable space wherein economies and various infrastructures get more integrated, and a smooth dialogue develops amongst the upper State (the EU), the nation States and the non-state actors (NGOs, companies...). This may not appear very ambitious, but to stabilise the economy and to pursue common interest are their main concerns. Of course, global security, as seen through the European prism, also involves achieving friendly relationships with neighbour countries (which, in the broad sense, includes some States from the former CIS and from the other side of the Mediterranean Sea as well). There is a general feeling that if this is established, prosperity will last and increase.

As you can see, my perception of the EU is that not many ideals remain. The EU nevertheless assists world security by marginalising nationalistic discrepancies within its own borders – the failure of which previously ignited World Wars. But the EU does not aim at revolutionising the world. I don't think I am presenting a minimalist vision of Europe, but a realistic view of what cements it and what is considered useful by Europeans: we have to content ourselves with managing the European space in order to guarantee prosperity, stability and security. Any other formula would not align the 25 EU countries.

At the same time, we need to acknowledge that, while the number of interstate conflicts has significantly decreased, some *remain*. This reiterates the ongoing relevance of the 'traditional' defence system at the same moment that new models need to be invented and implemented to secure our citizens.

In many corporations now, the status of the Chief Risk Officer is rising prolifically. His / her main task is to identify various types of risk – the company's vulnerabilities – and to mitigate them by eliminating as many as possible and by reinforcing the resilience of the company should remaining risks materialise. Are you suggesting that States should adopt a similar approach?

JD: Yes, and most Western States have been doing so since 9/11. The difficulty derives from the fact that they must preserve and renew the old *defence systems* whilst simultaneously adopting this new attitude, which may appear as inward looking. Nothing is guaranteed in today's world.

As far as non-Western countries are concerned, they will follow the same path from a pure 'defence frame' to a 'security frame', and will do so quicker than we anticipate, because globalisation goes hand in hand with free flows of information and people. However, it will still take years to achieve.

Since 9/11, we have seen Europeans and Americans adopt diverging attitudes in front of a similar threat. Do you think that Europeans have a different view from the Americans on the acceptable level of risk?

JD: You're pinpointing the key challenge NATO presently faces: can it remain a place where members exchange their perspectives on strategic issues – as well as exchanging their technical 'savoir-faire' – in order to propose a comprehensive resolution? This matter is especially confounding because the transatlantic community shares neither a common will of action nor analysis of the situation. On the one hand, the US would like to change the world into a more democratic and liberal one, whereas the Europeans want to preserve the regional *status quo* in order to enjoy prosperity.

In practice, Europeans perceive the level of insecurity as relatively banal compared to what they suffered during the World Wars. In fact, I sense that Europeans think that a certain level of risk is acceptable as long as vulnerabilities are analysed and taken into account. Terrorism's casualties, few hundreds of dead from time to time, are the price to pay to enjoy an open economy and society. No surprise, then, that Europeans tend to disagree with the Americans who choose to solve the problem posed to their society by prioritising nation-

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al security over civil rights. As a consequence, the level of political, military and financial investment – in a word, the priority given by the Europeans to their everyday security – cannot be compared to that of the US. NATO is also facing this dilemma today.

Additionally, Europeans are now willing and able to impose their difference in many fields. For example, the European Commission (EC) contests the US when it wants to impose itself as a unique source of normalisation. One key recent debate related to accounting norms: after extensive discussions between parties on both sides of the Atlantic, the EC opposed the idea of a US monopoly, and sought to preserve room to manoeuvre so as to define its own standards. Another example is Galileo: the balance of power was cleverly dealt with on technical, strategic and judicial grounds, thus enabling the EC to obtain a positive commercial result. We are definitively in a competitive world, with two champions competing and defending their methods and savvy.

The situation is, however, totally different in the field of security. Here, the US strategic view is brighter and dominant whereas the Europeans are far from competitive as they under-invest in thinking and are not suitably coordinated. Besides, the Americans propose a wide array of products. Hence NATO's *savoir-faire* and expertise is dynamically developed by the US.

Besides working on our vulnerabilities, another way to build 'security' in the long run could be to cope with the roots of the risks. What has changed in recent years that favours the growth of new risks?

JD: A globalised world has the characteristic of bringing people's *vital needs* closer. Previously, people were locked in different national or regional boxes and did not know each other enough. Today, as the media infrastructure advances and communication becomes instantaneous, global knowledge grows by leaps and bounds. Hence I think it should be possible to define some sort of 'vital needs' – which would cover health care, food, development, affordable energy, *etc* – that could be somehow guaranteed to people internationally.

'Sustainable security' is a transversal concept that does not yet exist but that, in my humble opinion, should be promoted. It would, in essence, permit one to go beyond the States, and even beyond the notion of the 'State': this concept is related to the 'vital needs' I just described, as well as to the way people feel about *their culture, their history* and *geography*. Look at the Balkans: people are full of ancestral hatred. Albanians in Kosovo continue to reference

events that occurred no less than 600 years ago! They still remember it; they are trapped in their own history. In the Maghreb as well, nothing will be achieved until some *historical truth* is restored. 'Sustainable security' will not occur until people succeed in stabilising their relationship with their own history.

So, two main aspects of 'sustainable security' are: firstly, the security of people through their historical and geographical fields; and secondly, the security of individuals through the satisfaction of their vital needs. The third aspect of 'sustainable security' is *predictability*. The world as a whole must somehow become more coordinated; the 'global liaison' between different structures, organisations, and institutions is to be established as a principle in order to make the international community more bound, more coherent. Preventive measures and a multilateral set of rules of conduct should be established in order to avoid global breakdowns – like a failure of the international monetary system, especially in the informatics area, or like a pandemic. Yet, people should not be surprised by irrational events that otherwise serve to radically alter their faith in the future. This would cause protectionist uprisings to safeguard micro – or national – interests, and could augment the likelihood of war. A real *faith in the global world* is needed, a faith in the world system.

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Lucio Loubet

9^{ème} série de la Métamorphose n° 20
(100 x 73 cm)