

## *Transatlantic Relations: An American Perspective*

### *The Challenges to European Security* Hans Binnendijk

In the more than two hundred years that the US has been a nation, we have lived through five international systems. The Napoleonic system, the Congress of Europe, the late-nineteenth century European development of Germany and the Alliance system, the inter-war period, and finally the Cold War.

We are now moving into the sixth international system. All the other transitions took place after a conflict and the resulting peace treaty, which formed the basis for the new order. We do not have such a clear basis now, which is why we are involved in such a lengthy period of transition. This also explains the difficulty the successive Bush and Clinton administrations have experienced in articulating a new vision for foreign policy and security relations. The American population wants to understand the world in 'black-and-white', clear terms, and unfortunately, the current situation in the world excludes the possibility of making this clear distinction.

This new system brings positive and negative changes. On the one hand, the major threat of superpower confrontation has subsided. On the other hand, the risks of conflicts have increased. We are in the historically unique situation of major powers at peace with one another, but simultaneously, we are confronted with new rifts developing in the world along cultural, national and ethnic lines. There are further contradictions: there is a strong movement towards democracy in parts of Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe. At the same time, we see conflicts erupting within states, sometimes as a result of democratic elections or referenda. We observe porous borders, with the increasing dissemination

of information and knowledge making it more difficult for autocratic regimes to survive. However, through these same porous borders pass drugs, disease and immigrants, causing severe problems in our societies.

To deal with this world of contradiction, the US State department initiated discussions on the idea of 'comprehensive security'. To illustrate this concept of comprehensive security, I have drawn up a matrix of challenges to European security (see fig.). The challenges have been divided according to the category where their expected impact will be the largest, and according to the probability of these problems arising. By structuring the challenges in this fashion, we can study this 'grey' world with clearer focus. I will briefly discuss this matrix and then focus on the core issues, which are the 'high and medium probability' issues that affect the European system.

The low probability issues are what I would term the 'nightmare scenarios', which would involve large threats, but which should not be our main concerns for the present. Many of the 'high probability' challenges with an impact on states, are currently 'high politics'. We have seen the impact of refugees on Germany and German politics. France is much involved with the Algerian crisis, in part because of the threat of massive refugee problems. Similarly, the issues of narcotics and international crime are also taking first place on the political scene. In Russia, there are currently three to four thousand criminal gangs, of which approximately one hundred have international connections. Development like this affects the ability of the state to function, and, therefore, move to the political fore.

Developments in this category have changed the role of the US command in Europe. The

previous tasks of UCOM were long-term planning and deterrence. The current tasks are operational. Since 1992, the command

has undertaken sixteen missions, almost all related to 'out of area' humanitarian missions.

	High Probability	Medium Probability	Low Probability
<p>Category 1 (Impact on the European system)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Crisis in Ukraine</li> <li>- Continuing crisis in Yugoslavia</li> <li>- Radical Islam in North Africa</li> <li>- Instability around Turkey</li> <li>- Proliferation of WMD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- US Isolationism</li> <li>- Russian ultra-nationalism</li> <li>- Central and Eastern Europe adrift</li> <li>- Atrophying of NATO</li> <li>- Threats to energy supply</li> <li>- Trade wars</li> <li>- Stalled arms control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use/accident of WMD</li> <li>- Russian aggression against Western Europe</li> <li>- Russia-Baltic conflict</li> <li>- Collapse of NATO</li> <li>- Renationalisation of defence policies</li> </ul>
<p>Category 2 (Impact on states)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internal ethnic conflicts</li> <li>- N. Ireland</li> <li>- Basques</li> <li>- Kurds</li> <li>- Transnational threats</li> <li>- terrorism</li> <li>- refugee/immigrant flows</li> <li>- Humanitarian challenges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expansion of neo-fascism</li> <li>- Continued EU economic stagnation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interstate ethnic conflicts</li> <li>- Hungary and neighbours</li> <li>- Greece - Turkey</li> <li>- Conflict over riparian rights</li> </ul>
<p>Category 3 (Impact on population)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transnational threats</li> <li>- disease</li> <li>- drugs</li> <li>- environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nuclear power accidents</li> </ul>	

Turning to the discussion of the core issues, my overall thesis is that the US has focused on the important problems. There are limitations to the US role in some situations, and Europe will have to acknowledge these limitations and consider them in foreign and security policy, but overall, my conclusion is that the US has done more than is often supposed in the field of foreign policy.

In studying the high probability concerns, one can note an interesting shift. The two most dangerous areas in Europe today are Ukraine and Yugoslavia. And I stress that this does not mean Bosnia, but the whole area of the former Yugoslavia and the possible spread south of the conflict. There has also been a clear shift southward of the area where the security challenges to

Europe initiate. There is a clear divergence of the emphasis of foreign policy within Europe, with Germany focusing on the developments in Eastern and Central Europe and Russia, and France, Italy and Spain directing their attention towards North Africa. In a recent poll, fifty-nine percent of the French stated that the main threat was from the South, not the East.

The question in Ukraine is whether it is a viable state. Ukraine is experiencing severe political and economic problems. The electoral map of Ukraine from the recent elections showed a clear line through the middle of the country. The Western half of the nation voted for Kravchuk and the Eastern half voted for Kutchma. This is a historical divide: the Eastern part of the country has always been focused on Russia;



the Western half of Ukraine has a nationalistic tradition and is historically more directed towards the West, formerly having been a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

In addition to this divide, Ukraine is confronted with problems on the Crimea. In a vote in 1992, 69 out of 73 parliamentarians voted for a new constitution which essentially called for independence. Although the government has backed down from this position, I believe that this is still the direction of choice in the Crimea. Next to these security problems, Ukraine faces huge economic problems.

The election of Kutchma may be a positive point. I expect that he will prove more capable than Kravchuk in managing ties with Russia and he seems to be more dedicated to reforming the economy.

The US has recognised these problems in Ukraine and has directed a great deal of foreign policy efforts towards maintaining stability in the country. President Clinton recently visited Ukraine, and the US has given more than \$ 1 billion in assistance to the country. A functioning network of contacts in Ukraine has been set up, and the trilateral agreement between the US, Russia and Ukraine has been concluded. The US has devoted much effort towards the nuclear issue, and I believe that Ukraine is now closer than ever to joining the non-proliferation treaty and disposing of its nuclear weapons.

If Ukraine divides or collapses and Russia becomes involved, this will have profound implications for European security, the strategic position of Russia and Russian-US relations. Therefore, the American involvement in Ukraine is of the highest importance.

There are few positive things to say about the crisis in the former Yugoslavia. Still, in some respects, like Wagner's music, US policy towards Yugoslavia is better than it

sounds. Although it has not been clearly articulated, the US policy on Bosnia contains four elements. Firstly, there is the large humanitarian effort. The second element of the policy is containment of the crisis. This involves the operations in the Adriatic, the no-flight zone, and Operation Able Sentry in Macedonia. Thirdly, the US has joined the contact group on Bosnia and was engaged constructively in developing at least a vision of a solution in Bosnia. Finally, the US has committed itself to play a part in enforcing a solution in Bosnia, if it judges that such a solution had a good chance of success.

What future developments are to be expected concerning the Yugoslav crisis? Firstly, I expect disagreements to arise within the contact group. Under pressure from Congress, the US government is seriously considering lifting the arms embargo. My personal view is that this is probably a mistake. Simultaneously, Europe is pressing to begin to lift the embargo against Serbia, because of the Serbian willingness to isolate the Bosnian Serbs. Further in the future, there are two possible developments of the Bosnian crisis. One possibility is a solution to the conflict, in which case the United States will be involved with troops. The second possibility is a further deterioration of the conflict and Serbian attacks on enclaves, which will also involve a US military role in air strikes.

Whatever the shortcomings and failures of European and American policy towards the Yugoslav crisis have been, the crisis has been contained. However, the danger of the crisis spreading to the Southern part of the former Yugoslavia is still large. Recently, I made a trip to Albania and Macedonia, and to put it briefly, the situation is worsening. Pressure on the Kosovars from the Milosevic government is mounting and calls for extreme action are increasingly heard. In Macedonia a statistic that is most illustrative of the situation is that 25-30 % of the wage-earners in Skopje have not been paid for at least half a year. The country is

also essentially without heating oil for the coming winter.

These developments could lead to an explosion. Massive refugee flows from Kosovo to Macedonia, or internal tensions in Macedonia leading to ethnic conflict could very easily lead to a sixth major Balkan war, possibly involving Greece, Albania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Serbia. The United States is engaged in the area in Operation Able Sentry, with five hundred troops on the border between Serbia and Macedonia. Europe, however, must devote much more attention to the conflict than it has been doing up to now.

There is also a high probability of an increased threat from radical Islam in North Africa. Tunisia is currently very concerned about a possible 'domino effect' from the developments in Algeria. If Algeria falls to the radical Islamic movement, I think much of the Magreb could follow. French and American foreign policy on the conflict in Algeria has been based on a differing assessment of the situation. The US position has been that the Algerian government probably cannot prevail in the conflict and that therefore, an attempt at dividing the opposition was necessary. The French position has been to support the government in the hope that it will prevail. In the past weeks, a turnaround in the French position towards promoting talks with the opposition has been observed. Again, the US was involved and in this instance developed a policy that is now being followed by others.

The fourth main challenge to European security is the instability around Turkey. Turkey has moved from a Cold War position at the periphery to a central position in the post-Cold War world. Turkey is surrounded by turmoil; Ngorno-Karabach, the Kurdish area in Northern Iraq, the Balkans and the Middle-East are all areas of extreme tension and conflict. The US has traditionally maintained close ties with Turkey, while there is a tendency in Europe to, at the very least, remain

distant towards Turkey.

The fifth issue is the problem of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. There are positive developments in the Ukraine, Kazachstan and Belarus in this respect. The dangers of nuclear proliferation remain large, however, as we continue to observe leakages of plutonium from the former Soviet Union. I believe the most dangerous countries in this field are Algeria and Iran, but other countries are trying as well. Nuclear proliferation has been a major thrust of American policy, as is exemplified by the American effort on North Korea. During the NATO summit meeting in January this was an important US initiative, which has since then stalled through lack of interest from the side of the Europeans.

Turning to the 'medium probability' developments affecting the European security system, we come to US isolationism. Elements of isolationism can be observed all through the political spectrum. On the right, Francis Fukuyama's book exemplifies this position with his statement that the US has won the ideological battle and therefore there is no further need to engage abroad to a similar extent as in the past. On the left, Paul Kennedy's book *Imperial Overstretch* questioned the wisdom of overseas commitments, when they will only harm the US at home. In the middle of the political spectrum, the position is that the US 'cannot be strong abroad before it is strong at home'.

This shift towards a 'pull back' from the international scene was witnessed in the 1992 presidential election, where Clinton focused strongly domestic problems. It is interesting therefore to observe that in the first period of his administration, Clinton has taken positions which were far more internationalist than the foreign policy of the Bush administration on Bosnia, Somalia and Haiti. This dichotomy in the Clinton position manifested itself with the death of the US soldiers in Somalia. Since then, the US policy has moved away from 'assertive



multilateralism' to a position best described as 'selective engagement'.

Peace-keeping and peace operations are no longer popular in the US. Europe will have to understand that there are real limitations to the amount of peace-keeping activities that the US can undertake. If the US gets involved in too many peace-keeping operations of great length, this may backfire and lead to a further shift towards isolationism.

Another core issue concerns developments in Russia. In recent discussions, Russia has been described as a potential supernova. A supernova is something that is expanding on the periphery and simultaneously exploding in the middle. This is a dangerous concept when one is speaking of a state, and it may be overdrawn. In Russia we see contradictory developments: Zhirinovskiy is losing popularity, while some of the former coup plotters are regaining respectability. A major shift in foreign policy has occurred: before last October, Russian foreign policy was directed towards integration with the West. Since October, the top priority has become the developments in neighbouring states, and policy is primarily concerned with the guarding of 'Russian vital interests'.

Russian foreign policy has been remarkably sensible, even towards Ukraine. It has resisted attempts to push the situation too far in Crimea, and in Georgia, despite Russia's earlier irresponsible role in the conflict, Russia now is operating under UN auspices.

Finally, I will briefly discuss some developments concerning Central and Eastern Europe. Regarding the PFP-initiative, it is my opinion that the PFP is currently the best achievable option. A Russian veto was not a constraint for developing more far-reaching security ties with Central and Eastern Europe. The constraint was the concern about what rapid NATO expansion would do to the internal politics of Russia. Another restriction was Western Europe:

the European members were simply not ready for a rapid expansion of NATO. A third concern was the US Senate. It is highly doubtful whether the required two thirds of the US Senate would approve extending security guarantees to, for example, Poland. Before we can extend full NATO membership and security guarantees to a Central or East European country, it must seem a natural act. When the relationship has reached this stage, the extension of guarantees will occur naturally.

The partnership is an early success: in the first half-year of its existence, 22 countries have entered. Recently, joint exercises in Poland have been completed, operational headquarters were set up, and the Clinton administration has earmarked \$ 100 million in aid to the partners. My concern is that we must maintain this momentum. One possibility is to consider how the partnership can be useful to Macedonia. The partnership could build East-West trade links and infrastructure in Macedonia and support stability in the area.

In conclusion, let me summarize my discussion in several points. Firstly, there are still clear dangers in Europe today and the US is paying attention to those critical issues and leading in many areas. At the same time, we must realise that there are limits to what the US can do in the area of peace-keeping. There are also financial limits, as the US budget is substantially tightened. This leads us towards what we might term a division of labour between the US and Europe. In this division of labour, the US has a very supportive role in peace-keeping operations and provides services that it can do well: intelligence, logistics and on occasion some peace-keeping. Another area where the US has an advantage is fast and powerful international action. However, the US cannot linger for a long period of time in a situation like Bosnia.

A second aspect of this division of labour is the US focus on Ukraine and Russia, which has important security implications

for Western Europe. Western Europe's leading role in aid to Eastern and Central Europe therefore can be said to be their part of this division of labour.

Finally, the institutions of security in Europe are adapting to the new situation, and the US has a large role in this restructuring. Too much time has been spent on discussing the institutions and not the issues. The institutions are not the problem, the difficulties stem from a lack of early consultation and political will to take action.

*Summary of the Discussion, Round Four*

*Uwe Nerlich* states that although Hans Binnendijk's comments were interesting, he finds cause to disagree on almost all the points that were mentioned. Concerning American policy on Ukraine, Binnendijk omitted that the US policy was at the outset fundamentally flawed, focusing solely on Russia and nuclear proliferation. The US policy towards Ukraine caused much of the later problems, since it put the Ukrainians in a position where they realised that there was much to gain by holding on to their nuclear weapons. The circumstances were very much similar to the occurrences in North Korea. It was only due to later efforts that they are now close to relinquishing their nuclear arsenal. They are still a long way from joining the non-proliferation treaty. As Russian ratification of the START agreements is still dependent on Ukrainian adherence, the problem is not yet solved.

Also, there is a deeper-lying problem than this narrow focus on Russia and nuclear issues. The unilateral American policy towards Russia and the Ukraine is an important cause of transatlantic disagreement on policy towards the former SU and Eastern Europe.

Secondly, on the PFP, the choice is not between rapid expansion of NATO and the current partnership formula. The countries in Central and Eastern Europe and in particular Poland, desire a relationship with

the West mainly for internal political reasons. The Pentagon has failed to recognise this, since they see NATO as a purely military organisation. The PFP is useful for training forces for joint operations, for instance in the peace-keeping area. However, the plans contain no institutional structures or ideas for collectively using the PFP forces. In addition, it completely and deliberately ignores the need for political structures that bind certain Central and Eastern European countries to the West and which distinguish these countries from other areas in Eastern Europe. We have told every country that they can eventually become a member of NATO and have not given any state a special relationship.

Thirdly, on European unwillingness to cooperate on non-proliferation, the working group that was set up through NATO under joint American-French leadership has gone nowhere, since there is still no American policy paper on the table.

Lastly, regarding the proposed division of labour, *Uwe Nerlich* strongly objects to the conclusion that Europeans should be the ones to go to the front, since American public opinion no longer supports involvement in peace-keeping operations. If the American forces restrict their role to logistical support, NATO will not fulfil any peacekeeping role and Europe will be forced to develop its own foreign policy. If American policy indeed shifts to this position, we will clearly be confronted with American inaction on the international scene and with a deterioration of our multilateral institutions.

*Hans Binnendijk* responds firstly to *Uwe Nerlich*'s criticism of the American policy on Ukraine. He agrees that initially US policy was perhaps narrowly directed towards Russia and non-proliferation. This was recognised quickly by the Administration and policy shifted position towards a broader focus of attention. The position that the Ukrainian government took on nuclear weapons was not caused by this initial



American policy, but by the developments in Russia, which were regarded as threatening.

The fact that the PFP initiative requires an additional political dimension does not detract from the value of the current form of the partnership. The contact of the militaries of Central and Eastern Europe with Western European forces are extremely important. Institutions governing the use of PFP forces do exist; decisions regarding the use of PFP forces are made in the 'NAC plus one' consultations.

On the need to differentiate between countries in Central and Eastern Europe, there already is a degree of differentiation in Europe. The fact that the PFP does not discriminate and the WEU does, provides the right balance, building special relationships with some countries without excluding others.

*Hans Binnendijk* stresses that the failure of the NATO working group is not the main issue on nonproliferation. The important difference between the EU and the US on this issue is simply that nonproliferation is of the highest political importance in the US, while this clearly is not the case in Europe.

On US involvement in peace-keeping operations, it is essential to realise the damage that would be done to US involvement in Europe and to NATO, if the US was to experience a 'Somalia in Europe'. This danger must be remembered when Europe calls for greater US involvement in peace-keeping operations in Europe.

*Sylvia Ostry* raises the broader issue of the link between security and economics. What we can observe in the field of IMF economic 'technical' advice to Russia and Central and Eastern European countries is that it is based on economic models which exclude all the political and security consideration that we are discussing here. There is no linkage between the issues of

nuclear weapons, dangerous power plants, the political disintegration of the former USSR and political tensions and the allocation of funds and economic advice. Does Hans Binnendijk see possibilities for developing a more integrated approach to the problems in Russia?

*Binnendijk* agrees that economic reforms in Russia are linked to security issues. The US has recognised this fact and has provided large sums in economic aid to the former SU. However, the success of the economic reforms depends crucially on Russian legal and institutional reform, for which the US is providing technical assistance, but which Russia has to take up itself. The platform where these economic and political issues have been linked is the G-7, which has been turned into a G-8 for political purposes.

*Flora Lewis* expresses her surprise at the suggestion of employing the PFP-forces in public works projects in Macedonia. This would certainly shift the purpose of the partnership from its initial NATO-based cooperative aims. In addition, the question then would be raised why operations of this kind should be confined to Macedonia.

Secondly, *Flora Lewis* disagrees with the idea that there is nothing between full NATO membership and the PFP arrangement. The domestic political implications for governments in Central and Eastern Europe of being able to claim that they are included in security arrangements with the West must not be underestimated. Inclusion into Western European security arrangements will provide the moderate political forces in these countries with arguments on the domestic political scene for maintaining policies focused on integrating with the countries and economies of Western Europe.

*Binnendijk* acknowledges that the involvement of the PFP in Macedonia would represent a new development in the partnership, but stresses that the economic, political and security situation in Macedonia



requires that such action be taken.

Regarding Flora Lewis' second remark, *Binnendijk* agrees that the domestic political implications of the links through the PFP are significant and stresses that as the partnership links are military links, it is important to devise ways to include civilian functionaries and politicians involved in security policy as well.

*Edmund Wellenstein* agrees with the point that Europe must pay more attention to the potential spread of the crisis towards Kosovo and Macedonia. What is surprising in this regard, is that America seems not to have raised the issue of Kosovo in the contact groups with regard to the lifting of the embargo on Serbia. Would this not be an excellent opportunity for the Americans to do so?

*Binnendijk* agrees completely on this point and stresses that the sanctions on Serbia must not be lifted until the issue of Kosovo is settled. If the sanctions were lifted, Milosevic would feel that he has complete freedom towards Kosovo, and the Albanians in Kosovo will feel abandoned, which makes for an explosive situation.

With regard to the 'security matrix', *Rob de Wijk* raises the matter of force planning. What is important to observe in the matrix, is that many of the 'high probability' crises do not require large military forces from a Western European point of view, while the 'low probability' threats have significant effects on the force levels Western Europe would require. In the context of the current defence budget cuts, the tendency is strong to plan for the 'high probability' crises which do not require a high level of heavy military capability. At the same time, this implies that we will perhaps not be sufficiently equipped to face more severe 'low probability' military threats. How can we solve this dilemma?

*Hans Binnendijk* agrees that there is a significant dilemma if one bases force

planning on this typology of threats. This problem exists both in Europe and in the US, especially since the military of the future is determined by decisions today. The threats discussed in the chart are the threats for perhaps the next decade. Force planning however, should also focus on potential threats in twenty to twenty-five years from now. Currently, he sees no answer to this question.

*William Wallace* asks what the implications of *Binnendijk's* analysis of security threats are for the stationing of American troops in Europe. The importance of maintaining the naval and air force presence in the Mediterranean area is clear. However, what are the implications for the American troops in Germany?

*Binnendijk* believes that the current commitment of 100,000 troops in Europe is the correct level, since the security threats in Eastern and Central Europe, Ukraine and Russia are still significant. Keeping American troops stationed in Europe is not necessarily more costly than stationing them in the US. Europe is also a good centre for many of the US military operations in the area of humanitarian and peace-keeping operations. In addition, the American presence has political significance. The structure of the American presence of 100,000 troops could be changed, however, towards less armoured presence.

*Graham Sharp* observes that the speaker has not referred to what was one of the original concerns that lead to this conference, namely the potential effects of trade tensions between the transatlantic partners on their security arrangements. Does the speaker's eloquent silence on this matter imply that he believes that this connection is not of great importance?

*Binnendijk* responds that trade wars are included in the chart on security challenges to Europe, and adds that the completion of the Uruguay Round was crucial to diminishing the risks that economic tensions would



disrupt the transatlantic relationship. The trade relationship with Europe is fairly even and is thus not a cause for great tensions between the US and Europe. The US trade imbalance with Japan, which is severely threatening the US-Japanese relationship is a case where there is a distinct possibility of trade frictions eroding the strength of the security arrangements.

On the situation in the Balkan, *Brands* points out that the issue of containing Greece's involvement in Macedonia has not sufficiently been discussed. It is of the highest importance that the dictatorial stance of Greece on Macedonia should no longer determine EU policy.

Secondly, *Brands* argues that the threat from the Yugoslav crisis is not the direct involvement of large powers in the conflict, but, more significantly, that the conflicts in the Balkan are linked to tensions in Russia and the Ukraine, which is not inconceivable. Containment policy should therefore be aimed at preventing such a linkage from arising.

*Binnendijk* agrees that Greece is playing a very destructive role in Macedonia, and that the EU and the US will have to demand that Greece drops the embargo against Macedonia. On containment of the Yugoslav crisis, *Binnendijk* believes that the strength of the transatlantic relationship and the ties with Russia have minimized the danger that major powers become involved in the conflict on opposite sides.

*Jean Barrio* wonders what the US policy on proliferation really is. In North-Korea, it has been impossible to observe a clear US policy.

In response to Jean Barrio, *Binnendijk* argues that the American position on North Korea is determined by the aim to prevent the disruption to the Asian political and economic scene that a North Korean nuclear capability would represent. Given this aim, and the pressures on the Administration do

take drastic action, the policy has been understandable and correct.