Foreign Policy and International Security

The Rt Hon Douglas Hurd CBE MP*

The Cold War was unfriendly but stable. The world without the Soviet Union is less apocalyptic, but in many ways less stable. The world will clearly continue to be disorderly; how to contain conflict and cope with the new political realities is now the big test - for diplomacy and security policy combined. They are two techniques for the same purpose, a more orderly world. They may in future be more closely intertwined, with a less clear distinction between them, than ever before.

I would like to say something therefore about:

- the search for a new European Security System;
- the handling of new kinds of crises;
- the adaptation of our military and institutional instruments to new demands.

The collapse of the Soviet Empire has left an international security landscape with few familiar features. Empires have declined and fallen before. But this one went with unprecedented speed and totality. Within days or weeks of 19 August 1991, the loss of authority in the Soviet Union, from the generals of the KGB to the traffic police on Moscow streets, was total.

Consequences of that collapse will be with us for decades to come. No longer do we have the simplicity, albeit an expensive simplicity, of deciding our security policy in the light of a single massive threat from the East. It is true that we cannot disregard the mountains of nuclear and other weaponry in the former Soviet Union; but diplomacy and the new political climate begun by Mr Gorbachev have given us the crucial agreements which remove this threat. Today, as inspectors hurry back and forth verifying the Conventional Forces Europe (CFE) treaty, our attention has refocused on the global threats of dangerous missile and weapon technology.

Thus military threats may face us from Eastern Europe or the Southern and Eastern fringes of NATO as both regions wrestle with acute political, economic and social problems. For insurance against these we have to maintain sound alliances and sound defences. Deterrence, as Manfred Woerner said at the Royal United Services Institute recently, still has a role in the new era.

Interest and conscience

But not all the security problems we face will respond to this classic remedy. Situations are developing in Europe, and the Middle East and elsewhere, which do not immediately threaten Western European or British national security but which are in themselves unacceptable. They are unacceptable because of the amount of death and suffering which they cause, and because of their potential to spread outwards. Yugoslavia is a classic case. But there are problems not only there, but also in Moldova, in Georgia and Azerbaijan, in the Horn of Africa; other problems are in the making, in Kosovo and elsewhere in the CIS.

In recent months, some academics have intellectually divided the actions we might contemplate into two broad categories: wars of interest, of which that in the Gulf is the most obvious example, and wars of conscience, which the Western intervention in the former Yugoslavia is said best to exemplify.

I confess, I do not find such a simple division reflected in the world with which governments have to deal. Who is to say that the rescue of Kuwait was not a matter both of national interest and of national conscience? Or that seeking to restore peace - and justice - to the lands of the southern Slavs is not a political as well as humanitarian imperative?

That, surely, is now the central fact about our security: that it is indivisible, both geographically and functionally. Some problems - state-sponsored terrorism, for example, or the proliferation of ballistic missiles - may prick our skin more than our consciences. But, if we really want a world that is more secure, more prosperous and more stable, then humanitarian problems can be just as threatening and must be seen not only as a moral issue, but as a potential security threat as well. We help people because they are hungry and because if they are not fed they will die. But it is also true that countries racked by famine or civil war will be unsafe neighbours in the world village.

The Russian Prime Minister, Mr Kozyrev, was in London recently. We had a good talk about bilateral and international issues. Russia and Britain are partners in a common effort to define a new security system for the Europe of the next century. Its first characteristic is that there is no longer the old East-West divide.

Of course vestiges of the old fault lines remain - less maybe among the political and military fraternity who now rub shoulders in exchanges and seminars, than in the varying levels of economic and political development across Europe. Our future security depends crucially on solving these problems: that is one reason why the British Government is clear that the European Community should enlarge. A major effort is going on, on the economic and political side, with Russia and the other CIS countries.

Never before in recent history have we had to improvise so much. The last three years have seen a hectic, not always co-ordinated, creation of new security instruments and adaptation of trusted institutions. The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) has achieved adulthood, if not maturity; NATO and the UN are changing rapidly. The role and responsibility of European organisations within these is developing fast.

New wine in old bottles?

The answer to the more diffuse security problems which I have described lies not in extending membership of all our Western institutions - NATO, EC - to all comers. That is not practical. Nor in proliferating new institutions. We are developing what in the jargon are called mutually reinforcing and interlocking institutions. What will bind these together is not a kind of institutional Highway Code - this as yet barely exists - but a sense of shared values and rules of international behaviour which governments are committed to defend.

For all its limited operational experience, the CSCE has, since its early success as a beacon to reform in the old Soviet Union, given an all-European perspective and a sense of values to our efforts to cope with change and upheaval. We need to build up its authority and use its instruments; we need to improve conflict prevention and dispute settlement; we need further military confidence building between states, and even within states, given the potential for internal conflict to cross national boundaries in Europe. That is why we think there should be a Code of Conduct governing relations between states in the security field; why we are looking at possible new norms of governing, the democratic control of armed forces and treatment of minorities. The CSCE will have a central place in our search for a future European Security Order.

NATO's future

But one important factor in the strength of the CSCE is the involvement of our transatlantic partners. It was recognised at Helsinki that NATO and the Western European Union could have a vital role in peacekeeping at the request of the CSCE. NATO remains a crucial component of the new security order, as a political factor for stability throughout the Continent, and as a practical instrument - though not necessarily the only one - for dealing with real crises.

Sometimes the idealists and cynics claim that the Alliance's job is done, and that NATO should be quietly laid to rest on the laurels of the longest period of unbroken peace in recent European history. I disagree profoundly. NATO brings to our security two advantages enjoyed by no other organisation:

- first, the Integrated Military Structure - the habit of collective defence acquired over four decades. At heart, NATO is a defensive alliance, or it is nothing.

- second, the political and military commitment of the North American allies to Europe. This is central to the security and development of Europe now and in the future. NATO is more than a military alliance. No European democratic politician could hope to generate the support needed to replace the resources which the United States brings to our collective security. A European Union without the underpinning of the Alliance would be a much less stable place.

There are already great pressures on America to pull back. The danger is that debate in Europe will add to those pressures. We must be careful not to send the wrong signals to Washington.

Like other institutions, NATO must continue to change - but the extent to which it has already done so is quite remarkable. In three ways in particular:

- by becoming more European: the European Allies must shoulder a greater share of the burden. Since Malcolm Rifkind spoke not long ago about the role of the Western European Union (WEU) in the new European

environment, I will not go into that here. But much progress has been made in the WEU, as shown in the discussions on its enlargement, its operational role in the Adriatic, and on its move to Brussels early next year;

- NATO has developed, through the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, new relationships with former adversaries in the East; and

- NATO is accepting new tasks: the territorial defence of western Europe is fundamental to our security, but no longer the most urgent call on our resources. "Promoting stability" is now a major task for the Alliance. As the Allies agreed at Oslo, NATO can, with the WEU and others, play a vital part in peacekeeping. Indeed, it is already beginning to do so.

Using resources effectively

These are our primary institutions therefore, but institutions alone will not resolve problems. It is the way we use our resources which counts. Architecture does not become real until builders start putting brick upon brick. Here too, we have made considerable strides. Though the risks, particularly as we look at Yugoslavia, are equally apparent.

Armed intervention in the new security problems I have described is difficult and often dangerous. In Yugoslavia or Somalia, massive outside force is not the answer. It would more likely add to and prolong the problem. Even humanitarian intervention requires a solid international basis of authority - which is why the United Nations, and the CSCE, are indispensable. Within that framework we need to develop more imaginative forms of preventive diplomacy. We must for example build up Article 99 of the UN Charter which allows the Secretary General to draw to the attention of the Security Council situations which might cause concern for international peace and security.

In security matters, as elsewhere, prevention is better, and often cheaper, than cure. Diplomacy must become - in the CSCE, in the UN - more successful in identifying the problems looming ahead and acting to prevent such problems from becoming crises. Britain has made a substantial and practical contribution to this.

Diplomacy is developing new techniques. For example, monitors. The EC Monitoring Mission in the former Yugoslavia has broken new ground. They have helped bring peace to Slovenia, which is now removed from the conflict. They helped bring the killing to an end in the Serb Krajina in Croatia. Here the achievement is more fragile. But their work in negotiating local cease-fires, and on local exchanges of prisoners continues and continues to help defuse passions.

We have also seen innovative monitoring missions in South Africa. All the parties in South Africa acknowledge that the outside world has a part to play. The main obstacle to success in the constitutional talks is violence. Now the parties have agreed accords to prevent such violence. More than that, they have agreed that the UN, the Commonwealth and the EC can contribute monitors to see that all sides keep to the accords. We are already there, doing precisely that. Just one example, but an example of what I believe is an increasingly important trend.

Peacekeeping

But, sometimes, peacekeeping will be needed. The basic idea is not really new. "Peacekeeping" is the new label on something which goes back at least as far as the activities of the Roman army at the height of the Roman Empire. But peacekeeping in the 1990s is a crucial change in direction, a crucial area of growth. A few figures illustrate this pretty well.

In the last four years, 11 new peacekeeping operations have been authorised, compared with 13 operations over the previous 43 years. At the beginning of 1992, the deployment of UN military personnel and civilian police peacekeeping operations was roughly 11,500. As the General Assembly opened last month, the figure stood at around 51,000, if you included new deployments in Somalia and in Bosnia authorised recently by the Security Council. In 1991, the UN's expenditure on peacekeeping was roughly £429m. So far this year, authorised expenditure adds up roughly to £856m, and that excludes UNOSOM whose budget has still to be decided.

All of these operations are different. It is no good supposing that peacekeeping will be tidy. Our armed forces cannot expect text book precision. Out of a total force of 15,000 in UNPROFOR I in Croatia, we are providing a field ambulance unit, eight observers and five headquarters staff. For UNPROFOR II in Bosnia, we will provide 1,800 infantry plus logistic support. Our contribution to UNTAC in Cambodia comprises 38 observers, a mine clearance training unit and a naval unit. If boils keep on breaking out on the face of the world, our commitments could well increase - provided, that is, that we wish to maintain

our position as a medium-large power with a developed sense of international responsibility.

UNPROFOR I, for example, has units from Ukraine, Egypt, Argentina, Belgium and half-a-dozen other countries. UNPROFOR II will have battalions from four countries - Canada, Spain, France and Britain - and support troops from several others. UNOSOM in Somalia is to have Pakistanis, Belgians and others. Language and differences in training standards and military practice are particular issues.

So we need to respond positively to the Agenda for Peace of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. That will require imagination, flexibility and improvisation. The countries providing contingents have to develop confidence in each other's capabilities. Command and control systems have to justify that confidence, otherwise the answer will be an ineffective ragbag. This mutual confidence was not necessary in the Falklands, became necessary in the Gulf, will be crucial in most peacekeeping operations in the future. Our own armed forces are rightly studying the implications.

Arms control

In parallel with peacekeeping, there is also a new arms control agenda to preoccupy us. Top of the list is preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Iraq gave us a nasty jolt. Neither Saddam Hussein nor any other dictator should be allowed to develop such a fearsome arsenal again, or to come so close to acquiring nuclear weapons.

We welcome recognition that we will have to look at new approaches to strengthen and police the international effort to prevent proliferation. Many significant steps have been taken in the last two years across the range of non-proliferation regimes. At the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Extension Conference in 1995 we shall press for indefinite extension. Recent accessions to the NPT, including China and France, will increase its reach around the world. The next challenge is to make it genuinely global, effective and permanent.

The new convention on chemical weapons is a major step forward, and a significant achievement for British efforts. We abandoned our chemical programme in 1956. It has taken us three and a half decades to persuade other countries to follow suit, but that effort was well worthwhile.

The transfer of destabilising conventional weapons is also a serious concern. It was his huge conventional forces that took Saddam Hussein into Kuwait. We have made a good start in promoting transparency and responsibility. The EC and Japan, at Britain's suggestion, sponsored the UN Register of Arms Transfers. The first returns will be submitted early next year. The five Permanent Members of the Security Council started talks last autumn and agreed guidelines of restraint in arms sales. At the moment, the Chinese have suspended their participation in the process. They need to come back.

I add two points. First, no-one is suggesting a moratorium on arms sales. All countries are entitled to defend themselves. There will still be opportunities for manufacturers to sell abroad. Secondly, difficulty is no excuse for inaction. What is more, everyone in the international community concedes the need for action. When the Chinese come back, there will be a chance to negotiate further steps for clarification and consultation on significant sales, which all the Five will abide by. Eighty-five per cent of the arms trade is controlled by the Permanent Five. We need to move forward carefully, but with deliberate purpose to promote openness and restraint.

New horizons, new responsibilities

The political changes of the last four years - most of them highly positive - have changed our concept of security. They have widened our horizons and our responsibility. This responsibility has to be shared. Managing this transition in Europe, East and West, and in the wider world will be an enormous and complex task. Our objectives are clear. Bur matching the tools to the job is going to be a much longer haul.

Institutions in Western Europe secured peace and stability for Western Europe, and laid the basis of our prosperity. In the West of Europe, we may have grown used to solving our problems around the conference table. But that is not always the case to the East of our continent. We now have to help the rest of Europe make the same transition. In a world where so much is uncertain, we must make the most of what is stable and beneficial to us. We should develop the institutions which have already served us well, not least in the security field. But we should not belittle the progress and the changes that we have already made.

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