

Old and New Security Threats to Europe

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Three kinds of states

When discussing security this paper will use a conventional definition excluding mega threats to security such as poverty, disease, global warming and energy dependence. For the same reason “human security” is excluded.¹

Europe is essentially the European Union with its 25 soon to be 27 nations. Unlike America it is post-modern, although parts of it such as the excommunist states still contain modern elements and some of the surrounding areas as the Balkans and the greater Middle East still are pre-modern.

The essence of this Union is all about subjecting interstate relations to the rule of law. In Europe “the rule of law has replaced the crude interplay of power, power politics have lost their influence. By making a success of integration we are demonstrating to the world that it is possible to create a method of peace”.² Until 1989 the cold war reigned and the West European states could operate in the post-modern mode within their own circle. Yet the Soviet Union compelled them to base their thinking ultimately on armed protection, secrecy and balance, the policy was still that of a modern state. But now the Europeans are post-modern states living on a post-modern continent.³

Robert Cooper’s classification of societies is illuminating:⁴

	<u>Success</u>	<u>Failure</u>
Pre-modern	empire	chaos
Modern	managing the balance of power	falling back into war or empire
Post-modern	openness and trans-national cooperation	to be discussed.

The failure of post-modern state is to be discussed because it may fail exactly because of threats.

¹ Roland Paris”Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?” *International Security*, Fall 2001.
² Robert Kagan: *Paradise and Power. America and Europe in the New World Order*. London: Atlantic Books 2003 p. 60.
³ Robert Cooper: *The Breaking of Nations. Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century*, London: Atlantic Books 2003 p. 54.
⁴ Ibid p. 76.

The threats to Europe come from all the three worlds, the pre-modern, the modern and the post-modern world. Because of the protection of America the traditional threats of the modern world, i.e. of armed aggression, seem to have disappeared for a long time to come. In defining threats to Europe it is important to remember that appeasement, especially in the interwar years, was a dominant policy of the dominant West European nations, Britain and France. Through appeasement and accommodation you remove the threat by defining it out of existence. In post-modern Europe many Europeans speak of challenges where Americans see threats.⁵

New security threats to Europe

The new threats are best defined in the European Security Strategy as presented in December, 2003.⁶

- Terrorism
- Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction
- Regional Conflicts
- State Failure
- Organised Crime.

The threats are obviously related to each other and one can lead to another. Thus regional conflict can lead to state failure where organized crime flourishes. Organized crime can escalate into terrorism. The greatest threat to the world community is now terrorists armed with weapons of mass destruction.⁷

Pre-modern states

State failure as in Afghanistan lead to organised crime. Smuggling of opium and narcotics from this area to Europe is funding large scale terrorism. Al-Qaida has a strong point in Afghanistan as do many terrorists groups in the Middle East torn by regional conflicts. Since Pakistan is on the verge of being a failed state nuclear weapons there could fall into the hands of terrorists, certainly a potential lethal threat to Europe. Pre-modern states are often the most violent ones. Through globalization this violence can be spread worldwide and thereby pose a new threat to Europe.

Modern states

Traditional big powers America, Russia, China, India are modern states. In Asia they interact in the classical way of international politics, creating hegemony or a balance of power at different times in different parts of Asia. Participating in this game are middle sized modern states: Korea, Indonesia, Vietnam, Singapore etc. and one post-modern state Japan. Because so many players have nuclear weapons: America, Russia, China, India, Pakistan and North Korea, the main threats to world peace may be here.

⁵ Kagan p. 32

⁶ *A Secure Europe in a Better World*, Brussels, December 12, 2003, published by The European Union Institute for Security Studies, Paris, p. 6-9.

⁷ *A Secure Europe in a Better World*, p. 8. *The National Security Strategy of the United States*. Washington DC: The National Security Council, September 17, 2002 p. 13.

Obviously Europe is indirectly threatened by conflict in Asia even if European serious military engagement in the area was zero between Dien Bien Phu 1954 and Afghanistan 2001 with the exception of the British in Malaysia 1963-66. But Russia as a modern state was also the largest old threat to Europe, a threat that essentially disappeared with the Western victory in the cold war. The answer to instability, state failure regional conflict and organized crime on the periphery of Europe has been to expand the area of the European Union, to create a post-modern space by admitting new members to the European Union, an stabilizing other neighbours through organizations such as OSSE and Partnership For Peace. Here optimism has faded since the European Commission in 2003 published the document *Wider Europe* arguing that Russia and other countries of Eastern Europe and the southern Mediterranean could be turned into a “ring of friends” around the enlarged Union, absorbing the Union’s political and economic values and being rewarded with aid and improved market access.⁸

The potential old threat from modern states is why Europe must acquire a robust defence culture and capabilities. Europe is irreversibly post-modern but the zone of peace created by the United States may be a temporary arrangement of some decades before that zone is challenged by new outside players in world politics. China and India have few reasons to use weapons of mass destruction against Europe, unless Europe gets deeply entangled in Asian military campaigns. A resurgent Russia is very unlikely but not impossible. An Islamitic state, rich because of abundant energy resources, such as Iran could be a future threat. This would amount to a Clash of Civilizations.⁹

Terrorism

Terrorism in the Caucasus, Middle East etc. has cells in several European nations and can attack European targets. In Europe these groups get education and also raise money. The 9-11 terrorists were not poor radicals but essentially wealthy middle class.

Weapons of mass destruction

Even if Iraq, Libya and Syria can be taken off the list of such weapons, Iran and North Korea have them and could target Europe in the future. Europe is gradually taking this threat more seriously acting not only in the field of arms control but also creating departments of home land defence and the beginning of a missile defence.

Regional conflict

Many border areas of Europe are torn by regional conflict. Major conflicts afar, especially in Korea and the Middle East have the potential of leading to major war with repercussions for Europe. Here the United States has used diplomacy and pre-emption whereas Europe uses diplomacy but now increasingly speaks also of prevention.¹⁰

⁸ *The Economist*. February 21-27, 2004 p. 27-28.

⁹ Samuel P. Huntington: *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*: London: Touchstone books 1997.

¹⁰ *A Secure Europe in a Better World*. p.18.

State failure

Failing states form the cradle of AntiWestern fanatic forms of religion just as the practise of such religions can lead to failing states.¹¹ Failing states also lead to unrestricted migration threatening Europe's borders. Given Europe's colonial past in Africa and America's lack of interest in the area it is likely that a good deal of European military and security resources can be tied up in that area.

Organised crime

Since Europe is one of the two richest parts of the world it is prime target for organised crime that has its origin outside Europe. Globalization makes drug smuggling, trafficking etc. easier than before and that is why organized crime is a genuine new threat to Europe.

Post modern states

Being post modern Europe has advanced technology that makes it vulnerable to skilled opponents of equal technical ability. It is even vulnerable to asymmetrical attacks since the computer hacker does not have the resources of his target but can inflict unproportional damage. Information war then can be waged by the underdog. Simultaneously the entire infrastructure of the post-modern Europe is vulnerable to determined attacks from outside, yielding big results with primitive means.

Yet the greatest threat to the post-modern EU may lie in its very post modernity. If the state is less important, if borders do not matter, devolution may turn into disintegration. A conceited, rich and hedonistic Europe, living in the post-modern space and seeing no evil could face a rude face awakening. A determined, even fanatical adversary with totally different goals and values could in the long run surprise and maybe fatally hurt such a Europe and its inhabitants. "Foreigners are different" as Robert Cooper puts it.¹²

¹¹ At NATO Forum on Business and Security in Berlin, February 10-12, 2004, almost all fifty speakers saw islamitic based terrorism as the main threat to international business.

¹² Cooper p. 88.