

LSE European Institute-APCO Worldwide Perspectives on Europe series

More Cooperation is More Security; Towards European Coherence in International Affairs

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Tuesday 8 November 2011

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<http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=233784&nodeid=15145&contentlan=2&culture=en-US>

My basic thesis is, that the classical approach to foreign policy and international relations, which has been dominating ever since the 1648 Treaty of Westphalen, is outdated and unworkable.

Interdependence in things both good and bad and whether we like the idea or not, is what governs international relations in today's globalizing world. This applies not only to relations between states but also more generally. The concept of absolute sovereignty is a fiction that does not reflect reality any more. The multitude of various interest groups, non-governmental organizations, multinational companies, social media and phenomena like conscious consumer choices are reshaping both domestic politics and international affairs.

Moreover, states can no longer claim the monopoly in international relations. And within states, especially in democracies, the leadership in foreign policy has to operate in an ever increasing interaction with the people.

In our time, foreign and security policy challenges for states cannot be reduced to a question about who holds control or direct political influence over what geographical area. Issues and possible solutions are increasingly other than military, or dependent on traditional power politics in general, and this is reflected in the expectations of citizens towards their representatives and policy-makers. Top priority issues include combating climate change; environmental and social sustainability; economic and financial stability, fight against poverty, radicalization and terrorism; tackling issues relating to failed states; as well as responding to cyber threats, natural and man-made disasters, contagious diseases, organized crime and the like.

Access to global commons is already a security policy consideration of growing importance. This should mean the international community co-operating in maintaining, developing and protecting freedom of the seas, space and cyberspace. In any country, the vital functions of society are increasingly dependent on uninterrupted flows of people, energy, money, data, goods and services.

When assessing the challenges of our time, the central factor to be taken into account is the growth of world's population. I recommend to anyone in audience to have a look at how dramatic the growth has been in their lifetime so far. Since my birth, the world's population

has already more than tripled, from some 2,3 billion to over 7 billion. At the same time, we have seen a global trend of urbanization, and how consumer habits have become more demanding. Change has been so rapid that what was still manageable only fifty years ago has already become unsustainable.

It may be that, even at best, we have only a few decades time in which to adapt our behavior to the exigencies of ecologically, socially and economically sustainable development. This is centrally relevant to arguments about the relative merits and efficiency of hard and soft power.

Responding to the current and future security challenges requires deepening and widening international cooperation: Deepening cooperation in Europe; Global cooperation with a strong United Nations and other rules-based international institutions; better Transatlantic cooperation; And the European Union and the United States working together with other important actors such as Russia, China, India and Brazil. It also needs this cooperation to be more transparent and have better democratic legitimacy in the eyes of our people.

We need comprehensive understanding and effective action in tackling global challenges. This requires burden sharing and contributions from all states and other stakeholders.

European Union needed as an actor

The European Union has contributed its fair share. Without the efforts by the EU, many global processes of key importance may not have started or produced results. Take for example the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change, the International Criminal Court, the upholding of international efforts in the Middle East peace process, or the launching of the Doha Round at the WTO. These are relevant examples also because many of these processes or their follow-up are stalling or need reinforcement. This cannot be blamed on EU, but we have to recognize that the leadership shown by the EU is weaker today than it has been at best, certainly in relation to what is needed.

The EU is needed as an effective actor, when the international community responds to global challenges. But the EU itself is facing trying times. In relative terms, the old, rich part of the world now has slow growth, an ageing population and a debt crisis. European states have to carry out painful economic reforms. Large-scale demonstrations are back in some countries, which in itself is legitimate in any democracy, but more worryingly they are not always non-violent, and populism and nationalist sentiments are on the rise in several countries in Europe. What future for the EU, you may ask. And if you are a citizen of an EU member state, I suppose you may go on to ask how much of the future of your country should lay with the EU.

Before trying to answer those questions, let me take a leap back in time. Having a background as a historian, I always stress the importance of knowing one's history, because those who don't know how they have arrived to where they are will not know how to move forward either.

Without condemning entire nations or entire groups of people, one has to recognize the violence our part of the world has inflicted on itself and on the world over the centuries when narrowly defined interests and nationalism dominated our thinking. This all culminated in two world wars with no comparison in world history, but there were also countless other wars, including colonialist wars far away from our part of the world.

The 1950's were a turning point. Europeans chose co-operation and peaceful integration, starting with the Coal and Steel Community. As economic integration advanced, more and more countries, including the United Kingdom in 1973, found it to be in their interest to become part of the community. By the time when Finland joined in 1995, the European project had become an openly political union. Since then, Common Foreign and Security Policy has been established for the EU and later, as a part of it, Common Security and Defence Policy. Thanks to all these cumulative developments, unanimously decided by the

parliaments and governments of the member states, our part of the world had by the beginning of the 21st century become known as an anchor of stability in the world.

Landmark decisions in European integration were often taken in times of crisis. For instance, Common Foreign and Security Policy and Common Security and Defence Policy grew out of the frustration caused by the inability to act effectively in the Western Balkans crisis. What was first proclaimed "The Hour of Europe" turned out to be the darkest hour of Post-War Europe. In particular the UK and France have given the essential input as the EU has developed more robust military capabilities in crisis management while other countries, such as Sweden and Finland, have given the impetus for developing Civilian crisis management capabilities.

Today, EU's role in global affairs is weakened by a general state of integration and enlargement fatigue as well as a debt crisis. This fatigue can be overcome, but there is no institutional trick available or any other way to do it, the only way to do it is to once again revive the political will to act together.

For that, I think we need to do three things that need not be bureaucratic, ideological or conferring new powers to the EU. First, make better use of the existing Treaties. Second, continue work on EU's enlargement. And third, increase our responsiveness to the concerns of our citizens. Let me explain each of these three points for the way forward in more detail.

First, make better use of the existing Treaties. Brits and Finns must have something in common in the work ethic, as they have a good record in implementing EU directives compared to the EU average. The UK, Finland and other countries in the Northern Europe may also share in feeling uneasiness in situations where political compromises transcend previous agreements. This has lately been the case with Finland when efforts to help the eurozone debt crisis at first overlooked the previously agreed rules of the Stability pact and the unequivocal no bail-out clause. Having said this, Finland is convinced that we can best work for our own benefit as an active member state and within the most advanced co-operation arrangements.

From a Finnish perspective, more efforts are needed to implement the Lisbon Treaty in the area of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The strengthened role of the High Representative and the new European External Action Service are welcome but they need much more support from the member states to increase or even keep up the level of activity the Common Foreign and Security Policy had prior to the Lisbon Treaty. While the High Representative is doing an excellent job in the current circumstances, member states need to do better in giving her political guidance. It is high time for the EU to get rid of the long-standing problem of giving to its representatives either unclear mandates, that are open to all kinds of criticisms, or too narrow mandates, that make it nearly impossible for the EU to negotiate with its partners.

The EU has to improve on the strategic level guidance. The 2003 European Security Strategy and the report on its implementation five years later were forward looking documents at the time, but a lot has already happened since then. There is a need for a new, comprehensive foreign and security policy strategy for the EU. Clarity of vision is needed on how the EU intends to make coherent use of its various instruments to advance its goals and how the EU intends to make use of the possibilities brought along with the Lisbon Treaty.

With these positions, Finland will continue its support for a strong Common Security and Defence Policy as well as recent initiatives to strengthen it.

My second point on the way forward for the EU was to continue the enlargement. It has spread peace and stability in Europe – even as recently as from the 1990's, the so-called European perspective has been a major stabilization tool in the Western Balkans.

Croatia will soon become the 28th new member state which is a positive signal to all Western Balkan countries. Hopefully, it would also give them a boost to continue not only important reforms but also the reconciliation process and regional cooperation.

The UK and Finland are firm supporters of the EU's enlargement process. Finland, although a relatively new member state, has been able to make significant contributions in this area, notably when during the Finnish Presidency in 1999 Turkey was granted official status as a candidate country for accession. This work has to continue on the basis that while the acceding country must fulfill the criteria, also the EU has to keep its commitments. This concerns above all Turkey that has become an important economic and political actor not only in its neighbourhood, but also in other parts of the world.

Turkey's active foreign policy and contribution to the stability and reforms processes in the neighbourhood can be an asset also for EU's foreign policy. Having Turkey inside the EU would definitely increase the weight and credibility of the EU as a global actor. It is of strategic European interest that the membership in the Union remains attractive to Turkey and other third countries.

My third point on the way forward for the EU was to increase our responsiveness to the concerns of our citizens. This should start with explaining again the origins and the continuing benefits of the European integration. Views in Europe converge on so many issues, and especially on the ones that really count for the future of our citizens. It is in their interest, that the EU clout is used in trade negotiations for their benefit. And that responses to their concerns on the climate change, continuing poverty in least developed countries, violations of human rights and lack of gender equality, just to name a few examples, are advanced by the EU.

European integration also has its limits. Hard power and military capabilities alone cannot and should not define EU's role. The EU neither has the need, ambition nor means to become a military Super-Power. The EU as a sui generis kind of organization - less than a federal state, but with a large degree of supranational decision-making and pooled sovereignty - is unique in its capacity to use variety of different instruments, including trade, economic and development cooperation and comprehensive crisis management instruments. One relatively newly developed strength the EU has is its strong contribution to civilian crisis management for which there is much demand in the world today.

Nordic model

A more coherent European role will complement European countries bilateral relations as well as work done in other for such as NATO, OSCE and Council of Europe. There is a well functioning political framework and security architecture in Europe where each organization has its relative strengths.

However, there is still room for increased co-operation on a regional basis, as in the Nordic area, comprising Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland.

The Nordic region has actually set an example for wider European integration with its many innovations starting from passport free travel, a common labour market and local election voting rights for citizens of Nordic countries living in another Nordic country well before they were adopted in the EU. Close co-operation continues in many areas, but in the last few years, progress has been particularly rapid in the field of security and defence cooperation. In addition to the long tradition of cooperation in UN crisis management, with more recent examples from the UN mandated EU and NATO operations, this now includes also co-operation in building military capabilities.

At their meeting in Helsinki in April this year, the Nordic Foreign Ministers declared their countries intention to cooperate in meeting the challenges in the area of foreign and security policy in a spirit of solidarity. Foreseeable security threats include for example natural and

man-made disasters and cyber and terrorist attacks. Should a Nordic country be affected, the others will, upon request from that country, assist with relevant means. The intensified Nordic cooperation will be undertaken fully in line with each country's security and defense policy and complement existing European and Euro-Atlantic cooperation.

The tragic events in Utoya, Norway, reinforced the sentiment of communality and solidarity across the Nordic area. Norwegians have showed us an encouraging and admirable example of upholding democracy and the rule of law when these values come under a direct attack.

Looking ahead, prospects for deepening Nordic cooperation are favorable. As the Nordic countries have opted for different solutions regarding memberships in the EU and NATO, Nordic cooperation, while very valuable as such, can also open additional opportunities at practical level. Furthermore, Nordic cooperation could also serve as a model in the wider European and Euro-Atlantic context, also in the area of pooling and sharing of military capabilities.

The Nordic model of a welfare state, based on combining economic competitiveness with equality and social well-being, can offer food for thought also for efforts to respond to global and European challenges. Nordic countries have undergone deep and often painful reforms to overcome difficult times in economy, and have shown a model of solidarity when Iceland was hit by a crisis.

Perhaps it should also be said, that the Nordic Model is a concept was not invented in the Nordic countries; rather it was outside observers who first used the concept in the 30's and 40's to characterize Nordic Societies. Since then we have been happy to adopt the concept and have openly shared our views and experiences with these who are keen to understand why all the five Nordic countries usually end up among the top ten in most international "beauty contests" rating countries on the basis of their educational achievements, environmental care, social welfare, competitiveness or even happiness.

At the global level, Nordic countries will promote free and fair trade, based on upholding and developing the current universal WTO-based regime, in the way that the needs of the least developed countries are recognized and supported. Nordic countries favour setting high standards for environmental and consumer protection, human rights and core labour standards. This can be a successful model of not focusing too narrowly on increased short-term economic productivity but also on sustainability and well-being, thus maintaining long-term competitiveness and positive incentives for internal stability in the society.

Foreign and security policy in the Nordic countries has been based on pragmatism; on values but not ideologies; and on openness to international co-operation. Hopefully there is something in that spirit which could be replicated to the European Union level to revive the will for working together for a more coherent and effective foreign and security policy. That is in the interest of all member states and each one is needed to shape the EU to be what each and all member states want it to be. This is also what our citizens deserve.