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The Shifting Face of Violence

It has been argued that Human Security would be on the rise again. The tragic wars in the Balkans, in West and Central Africa are over. The UN is doing its job – and doing it well. But can we relax? Are we doing the right thing? Is time on our side? Or is the potential for violence growing? This article argues that while the risk of traditional war has diminished (though not disappeared), we face an explosive mix of new threats and challenges that promise violence. The list ranges from non-traditional warfare and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to the consequences of global warming, demographic pressures, urbanization, a growing competition for energy and other scarce resources all the way to the rise of organised international crime, illegal migration, IT and other critical infrastructure vulnerabilities, as well as to terrorism. This shifting face of violence has implications for the role, training and use of armed forces. It requires, above all, new integrated thinking, which formulates answers not only from a military perspective but from the perspective of the security sector as a whole.

Theodor Winkler*

In October 2005 the Human Security Centre of the University of British Columbia published the first "Human Security Report".¹ It brought good news. The report argued that the number of conflicts in the world, of battle death, military coups, refugees, international crises, and genocides would have gone down after the end of the Cold War. The UN and the international community would be doing their job – and do it well.² The figures presented by the report (based on data compiled by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program) soon led however to a debate.³ There were three major arguments forwarded by the critics of the report:

- The reliability of conflict data sets would be chronically deficient. That would also apply to those presented by the report.⁴
- The data would measure the direct costs of conflict, mainly battle death in armed conflicts – thus ignoring significant numbers, if not the bulk, of conflicts and victims: People killed by marauding bands or dying of hunger or thirst because such marauding bands prevent them from tending their fields or even fetching water.
- The data might, finally not truly depict the real nature of the threat to human security. For the nature of that threat might be changing by the emergence of a phenomenon called "new wars."⁵

The authors of the "Human Security Report" take this criticism seriously and intend in the report's next edition (to be published at the end of 2007) to include a chapter dedicated to the "hidden costs of war."

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This article does not intend to enter into the debate on data and statistics. It rather wants to broaden that debate by asking four fundamental and interrelated questions:

- Are we confronted by a *shifting face of violence*?
- Is the *potential* for violence growing?
- If so, are *we doing the right thing* to reduce the potential for future violence?
- In short: *Is time on our side*?

The article will also address the implications for the armed forces, the security sector and the approaches needed by the international community.

Trends

Traditional warfare

One can argue that we live today in relatively peaceful times. Organized violence was – not only in relative, but even in absolute terms – throughout most of history a much more prevalent part of mankind's daily life than today. Similarly, the threat of an all out nuclear exchange was a permanent defining factor of the Cold War. Peace (or perhaps better the absence of large-scale war) depended on such concepts as deterrence, "Mutually Assured Destruction" and an overkill potential. That threat has clearly become less probable today (though it has not disappeared).

Conflict in its traditional form continues to exist. There lurk also still dusty risks from the past – such as the unpredictability of an ultimately eccentric North Korea, which might, if feeling cornered, suddenly lash out in a suicidal way at the South, or the Taiwan question for whose solution the People's Republic of China has not ruled out the use of force once and for all.

It cannot be excluded that the risk of more traditional conflicts might in the years to come again grow. Should, for instance,

the US, in many respects the world's de facto hegemon, be perceived as being increasingly tied down in Iraq, Afghanistan and possibly other crisis hot spots (and thus seen to be unable to react to emerging new global challenges), the temptation would be there for many to use the hour and create military *faits accomplis*. There is a historic precedent for this. When the artificial international stability imposed by the Cold War ended, we saw the eruption of many dormant or frozen conflicts. The end of the

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Cold War led not to the end of history, but to its return with a vengeance. Borders were redrawn in blood. The horrible word of ethnic cleansing entered the political vocabulary. Should the US truly founder (or be perceived to founder) in the quagmires of Iraq and Afghanistan, we should expect, beyond the immediate negative consequences of such a defeat in the countries concerned and in the Greater Middle East at large, a ripple-effect of resurgent conflict in other parts of the world. A vulnerable hegemon is a powerful incentive for predators to gang up.

The slow crumbling of the international non-proliferation regime raises, moreover, the risk of local nuclear war and of an increased threat to use nuclear weapons or of critical nuclear components falling into the hands of terrorists. The consequences would be disastrous. A nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan, though clearly unlikely at present, might involve dozens of nuclear warheads and would have a serious

¹University of British Columbia, Human Security Centre, *Human Security Report 2005: War and Peace in the 21st Century*, Oxford University Press, New York, N.Y.; cf. Tables 1 and 2.

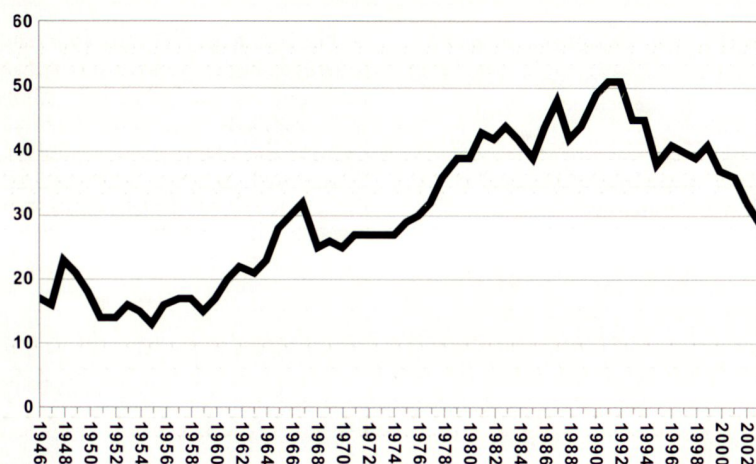
²The UN has indeed never before had as many uniformed personnel in Peacebuilding missions as today. Cf. Tables 3 to 5. One may, though argue, that, if things would go well, that number should drop, not rise.

³cf. in particular Michael Brzoska, *Definitions of armed conflicts and wars. Are they still reliable?* SIPRO Yearbook 2007.

⁴A good example for this type of discussions are the debates on how many casualties the US operations against Iraq have cost. Cf. for example Joachim Lauckenmann, "Statistik des Todes; Umfragen liefern in Kriegszeiten genauere Daten über Opfer in der Zivilbevölkerung", in *SonntagsZeitung*, 3. Dezember 2006, pp. 88–89.

⁵Cf. Herfried Münkler, *Die neuen Kriege*, Rowohlt, Reinbeck bei Hamburg, 2002.

Table 1. Global Numbers of armed conflicts, 1946–2003



Source: Uppsala/PRIO, 2004, in Human Security Report 2005

impact on the planet's climate.⁶ The longer term political, psychological and strategic consequences of such a "limited" nuclear exchange would be simply incalculable. A Taliban-type fundamentalist and nuclear armed Pakistan would be a nightmare.⁷

Conclusion 1: Traditional warfare is today on the decline, but has not disappeared – nor is it likely to disappear – as a contingency. Even limited nuclear war remains a risk that needs to be taken seriously.

Non-Traditional Warfare and Terrorism

Most conflicts in the early 21st century are, however, no longer of a traditional nature. They are not fought between governments, but between a government (or coalition of governments) and sub-state actor(s) such as party or ethnically based militias and armed groups, guerrilla or terrorist organisations, clans, warlords, organised communal groups or simply criminal gangs. An increasing number of conflicts is even being conducted between the latter groups themselves – with no, or only an indirect, government involvement. The phenomenon of disintegrating, failed or faltering states has led, particularly in the second half of the 1990s – from the Western Balkans to Africa – to violence at a level unheard of for a long time. We are indeed confronted by a multiplication of actor issues, and means⁸ – leading to totally new conflict patterns and an increase of conflicting issues and stakes. There is every reason to believe that the potential for this type of conflict is growing.

Such non-traditional conflicts prove, first of all, difficult to extinguish. Historical data show that roughly half of the conflicts stopped as a result of national reconciliation efforts or UN or other international crisis management efforts erupt within the

next five years again.⁹ Peace is fragile commodity indeed.

The reasons are multiple. There is the fact that the ability to conclude peace is handicapped, if the state monopoly of legitimate force is lost and non-state actors are involved. Such sub-state actors are often involved in a sharp competition with each other¹⁰, and are often ill prepared to establish stable governmental structures capable of exercising control over all armed elements and to offer security to the entire population. The latter inability encourages,

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in turn, the creation of militias by those segments of the population that feel threatened.¹¹ They can, and most often do, trigger the sparks for new and even more violent conflagrations.

There is also the phenomenon that many non-traditional conflicts have a regional, some even a global dimension. The multiple conflicts which at the turn of the century shook West Africa were interlinked. Fighters crossed from one country to the other and participated in more than one conflict. We are witnessing a trend towards the interlinking of internal conflicts that can best be described as the emergence of a new phenomenon, "regional civil wars." At an even larger scale, Afghan Mujahedeen have subsequently fought in as different conflicts as Bosnia Herzegovina, Chechnya, or Iraq. If a peace settlement cannot be extended into a regional settlement, the risk that non-traditional conflicts will be rekindled, is substantial.

There is the problem of the easy availability of small arms and light weapons. Conservative estimates place the number of guns in the world at least at a staggering 500 million, those of automatic rifles at 55–72 million.¹² Add to those numbers countless grenades and rocket launchers of all descriptions, mortars and other light weapons as well as shoulder held surface to air missiles. The weaponry to make conflicts flare up again at any time is available in most post-conflict situations. The abundance of weapons in most conflict zones makes non-traditional conflicts also cheap to run, particularly since the soldiery is often living off the land.¹³

Finally, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction are extremely complex operations for which the international community is only now developing the necessary understanding, expertise and tool box. We shall come back to this point.

Non-traditional conflicts prove also difficult to win, as have shown many counter-insurgency operations – and Vietnam.

This is particularly true, if we look at terrorism – as the US perplexities in its so-called "War on Terror"¹⁴ bear witness. Several factors contribute to this outcome. The United States is confronted not only with asymmetric warfare, but with a set of adversaries that pursue asymmetric objectives. Al Khaida does not want to win the war; it wants the US to lose it. That is not the same thing at all.

⁶ A "limited" nuclear exchange involving some 100 Hiroshima type nuclear weapons might result not in a "nuclear winter", but in some sort of "nuclear fall", affecting the world climate for about a decade and leading, depending on the region, to a reduction in the world's temperature from 1.25° to 4.0° Celsius. World food production would be severely affected. Cf. Joachim Laukenmann, "Der atomare Herbst", in *SonntagsZeitung*, 11 March, 2007, p. 81.

⁷ For the risks involved in clandestine proliferation cf. The International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Nuclear Black Markets; Pakistan, A. Q. Khan and the rise of proliferation networks; A net assessment*, London, 2007.

⁸ Curt Gasteyer, "The Multiplication of Actors, Issues and Means", in *International Relations in a Changing World*, Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva, 1978.

⁹ Cf. United Nations General Assembly, *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all*, Report of the Secretary General, Addendum: Peacebuilding Commission, UN Doc.A/59/2005/Add.2 (23 May 2005), p.1.

¹⁰ Palestine is a good example in this respect with the rivalries between Hamas and Fatah (as well as a whole set of additional, smaller factions).

¹¹ e.g. the Shia and Sunni militias that have sprung up in Iraq.

¹² Graduate Institute of International Studies, *Small Arms Survey 2001*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 62.

¹³ Cf. Münkler, *op.cit.*, pp.131–142.

¹⁴ A most unfortunate term which is, it must be feared, at the source of not only many misunderstandings and wrong perceptions but also faulty decisions.

The ultimate target group of fundamentalist terrorist organisations is *not* the US or Europe. Their *physical* target may be the West; their *political* targets are the minds of the frustrated young men in the Islamic world. Their main worry is the realisation that the West might be able to lure Muslims into a multicultural society.

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Terrorist organisations seek large casualty rates not as an objective in itself. They do, so to speak, only kill incidentally; they lash out not so much at the bodies of their helpless victims than at the minds and souls of those who survive – the relatives of the victims, the communities they lived in, those who watch TV. The very word “terror” makes it clear that the target group are not the dead, but the living. They aim to provoke, both in the West and in the Muslim world, a response that sharply reduces the chance for multicultural understanding and integration while eventually fostering intercommunal distrust and self-isolation. Osama bin-Laden may abhorre Madonna; but he adores Huntington. We are confronted with people who do not play Rugby, but three band billiards. For that very reason, terrorist organisations are difficult to defeat. The stronger the countermeasures, the more security forces risk playing into the hands of the perpetrators.

The increasingly interdependent technological base of our society offers a multitude of critical infrastructures as targets for attacks with spectacular results – as do large events that attract huge crowds (from sports and cultural events to political and religious meetings). Security forces are, thus, continuously overstretched. An integrated approach, combining all components of the security sector (from the police to the armed forces, the border guards and, particularly, intelligence agencies) is required. Terrorist organisations of the Al Khaida type have, moreover, long ceased to be strongly hierarchical in nature. They have split up in small cells and encourage the creation of new, totally autonomous, like minded cells. They are like cancer. To counter such a threat is more difficult. Any countermeasure will no longer be directed against a clearly defined adversary, but rather against a much more diffuse enemy.

It must, finally, be assumed as a near certainty that terrorist organisations will use sooner or later weapons of mass destruction. Since stealing or building nuclear weapons remains extremely difficult, crude

radiological and – perhaps not so crude – biological weapons¹⁵ appear as the most likely candidates. Access to (for instance medical) radiological materials is relatively easy; the psychological impact of the use of even a very primitive radiological device would though be massive.

Conclusion 2: Non-traditional forms of warfare will become ever more relevant. There are at least three different trends to be observed in this context. First, conflicts pay. Fought with asymmetrical means and often in a most brutal way with total disregard to human dignity and welfare¹⁶, small scale conflicts are likely to stay with us, if not to increase in numbers. They will also be increasingly regional in their nature and impact. Secondly, non-traditional warfare in the form of terrorism is posing an increasingly complex challenge. The number of victims may be limited – but then it is not their number, but the psychological impact that counts. The issue at stake is here no longer traditional victory (gaining control over a given territory or population), but indirect warfare. Thirdly, the use of crude weapons of mass destruction against civilian targets is a very likely contingency. In sum, looking at non-traditional warfare and terrorism, the potential for violence is clearly growing.

Raw Materials and the Climate

Access to raw materials has historically always been a strong driving force for conflict. It was one of the rationales on which colonialism was built. In an age of globalisation, free access to raw materials (and other production factors) would seem self-evident. Yet what we witness on the ground is a return to a new sort of a Great Game.

The essence of the problem is basic: If the consumption of raw materials (particularly oil and gas) available at a given price is growing more quickly than the production (and exploration) of those raw materials at that price, the price will rise. Already an anticipated shortage may lead to strong market impacts. If giants like China and India become major buyers on the international energy markets, the price will ultimately explode.

The result is a silent, though increasingly bitter, contest between Great Powers over the access to, and the transit rights for, key raw materials. Thus, China has multiplied its diplomatic missions to, and agreements with, African states and countries in other resource rich regions. Russia is flexing its muscles, too – both in the Caucasus and on with respect to Ukraine, Belarus and Georgia. The United States, in turn, has always been a keen player in this field – more than once being lured by American oil companies to confuse their commercial with US national interests.

The race to gain control over natural resources is, in the decades to come, likely to intensify. It seems, from today's perspective, quite unlikely that raw materials will become the trigger of major military conflicts – such as a war between China and the United States. But it seems more than possible that we shall see a return to the proxy wars (often at a low intensity level) of

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the Cold War, waged this time over the control of natural resources and their trading arteries. The conflicts in Darfur and Southern Sudan, in the Caucasus and Western Africa contain this dimension already today. More is to come – particularly if the list of scarce resources should soon also include access to fresh water and arable land.

It is, indeed not only the access to fossil fuels, but even more so their consumption that is likely to bolster the potential for conflict in the world to come. The hunger of our planet for energy is creating a new, and potentially deadly, danger: climate change and global warming.¹⁷ The question is no longer whether this will happen. The question is only how to deal with that threat in order to prevent it from growing even worse, and how to cope with the ripple effects the damage already done will inevitably have.

The analysis and the predictions of the United Nations “Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change” published in February and April 2007 are unambiguous: The atmosphere will until the end of this century become warmer – in the worst case by 4.0 ° Celsius, in the best case by 1.8 ° Celsius.¹⁸ The report caught, contrary to its predecessors, the world's attention. Measures to reduce CO₂ emissions and to generally soften the negative impact of humankind on the environment have been initiated – most notably by the European Union, but also in

¹⁵ The cracking of the DNA has potentially opened the door to a whole new generation of “designer biological weapons” that can cause disastrous effects.

¹⁶ In the civil war in Sierra Leone civilians, particularly children, were brutally mutilated in order to impose a humanitarian burden on the adversary.

¹⁷ Cf. The reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of February and April 2007 published by the WMO and UNEP.

¹⁸ IPCC, Climate Change 2007: The Physical Base; Summary for Policymakers, WMO/UNEP, February 2007, p. 11.

other countries. Whether these measures will be enough (given the obvious reluctance of the United States, China and some oil producing countries against substantial measures. The recent G8 summit at Heiligendamm has however offered some hope), and whether the mood of the moment can be sustained, remain very much to be seen. Sadly enough, it seems at least in the short and medium term more likely that the situation will further worsen than that it will truly improve.

Global warming will cause problems enough for a country like Switzerland. The melting of the glaciers, the increase in landslides and floods, or the abnormally warm winter of 2006/2007 are signs on the wall. A country like Switzerland should, however, essentially be able to cope.¹⁹ Consequences will, though, be disastrous for other parts of the world. Regions that suffer already today from scarcity of water and hunger – or that for other reasons are just barely able to hang on – will be most hardily hit. Desertification, draughts, bush and forest fires, flooding, ever more devastating storms, the rising of the sea level, even a spreading of insect transmitted diseases, are the key words in this context.

This will put in the short and medium term millions, in the longer term hundreds of millions of people in front of the question of whether to stay – and die – or whether to migrate. The answer is obvious. Climate change and global warming will massively further accentuate the trend towards global migration. Some of the regions likely to be most affected, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, are already today particularly conflict prone. Other regions – like low lying Bangladesh²⁰ – will be confronted by unsolvable problems should the sea level rise. According to some estimates, 22 of the 50 largest cities of the world might be affected by a rising sea level – if not simply disappear under the waters²¹. Access to fresh water²² and arable land will become scarce.

Conclusion 3: The potential for violence is likely to grow as a result of an increasing competition for raw materials (particularly fossil fuels), a resulting return of the notion of geostrategy, and – as a result of global warming – in the longer term also of an increasing struggle for fresh water and arable land. Predicted climate changes are likely to trigger substantial migratory pressures that have every potential to further increase the potential for violence both inside fragile societies and at the sub-regional and regional level.²³

Demography, Migration, and Urbanisation

Within the next decades the world is facing very substantial demographic problems. These problems are particularly acute in Western Europe and in China, where the number of the elderly will grow most strongly in proportion to the overall population.²⁴ The inverse holds true for the developing world, where on average 37% – and in the least developed countries a staggering 49% – of the population are less than 18 years old.²⁵ According to Huntington, societies with a share of more than 20% of 15–20 year old youth to the overall population would be prone to violence and conflict – for they would no longer be able to offer an economic and societal perspective to the third and fourth borne males. Studies by German demographer Steffen Kröhnert seem to confirm that statement.²⁶

Another result of demographic imbalance is a strong migratory pressure from the overpopulated parts of the globe to those that have no longer enough young people to sustain the elderly population. The migratory trend is primarily – but by no

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means not exclusively – from the poorer South to the richer North. Illegal migration is a global phenomenon that affects much of our planet – and which costs every year uncounted victims that drown in unseaworthy boats or otherwise

perish. Increasingly, organised crime is playing a major role in this tragic phenomenon. Thus, the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime estimates that the illegal transport of migrants from Africa to Europe nets criminal gangs an estimated 300 million Euros per year.²⁷ The nature of the criminal organisations involved has also changed. Small-time smuggling organisations work today increasingly with transnational and cross-national networks.²⁸

Migration is also a function of conflict. Currently, conflict has – as the Human Se-

¹⁹ Cf. Beratendes Organ für Fragen der Klimaerwärmung (UVEK/EDI), *Klimaänderung und die Schweiz 2050*, Bern, March 2007.

²⁰ To illustrate the point: should the sea level eventually rise by up to 6 meters, as some experts fear, 120–150 million inhabitants of the Ganges Delta might have to flee from the waters (Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth*).

²¹ Including Tokyo, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Mumbai, Calcutta, Dhaka, London, and New York. *Stern*, No. 12/2007, p.72.

²² Today some 1.2 billion human beings have insufficient access to fresh water. Water is developing steadily into a source of conflict. The trend will accelerate. According to the latest climate predictions (IPCC Report of 16 April 2007) the number of human beings without sufficient access to water will grow by 2080 to some 3.2 billion – with Africa being hardest hit.

²³ According to the same IPCC Report, flooding alone could by 2080 displace every year up to 100 million human beings.

²⁴ Cf. “China in der demographischen Zwickmühle; Überalterung und Mädchenmangel”, in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 2 February 2007, p. 9

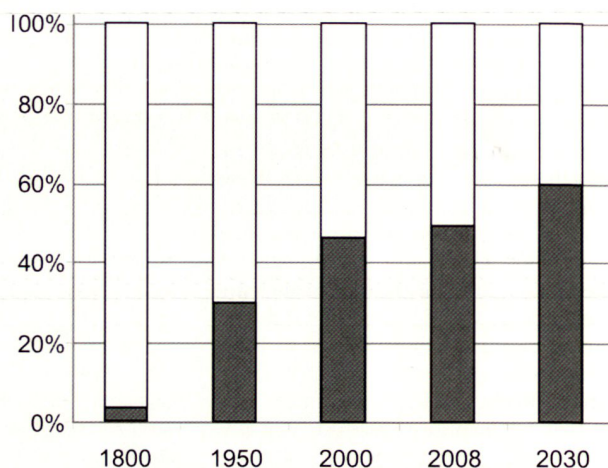
²⁵ UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 2007*

²⁶ Cf. for more details Balz Spörri, “Die Wurzeln der Gewalt”, in *SonntagsZeitung*, 11 June 2006, p. 80.

²⁷ Caroline Brothers, “Criminal organizations wring big profit from illegal migrants”, in *International Herald Tribune*, 20 March 2007, pp. 1 and 8.

²⁸ *ditto*.

Table 2. Urbanisation of World Population



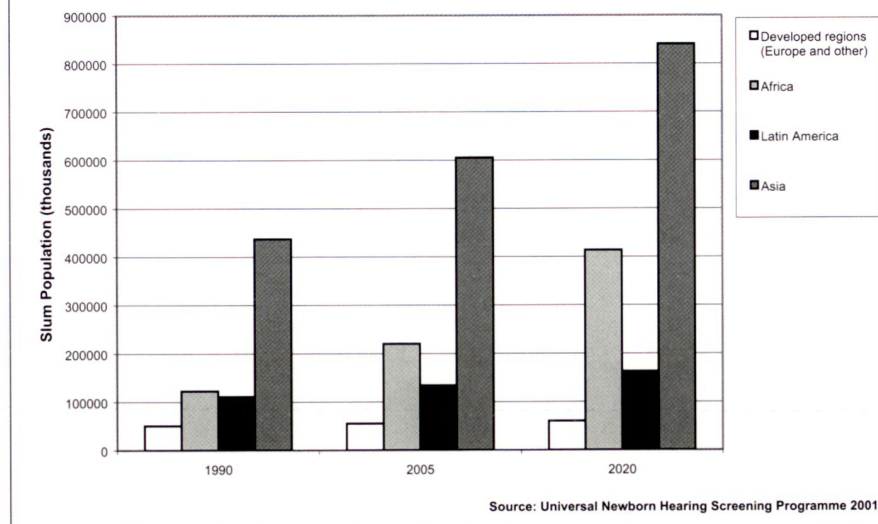
Source: Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Programme (UNHSP), Basics 1/2001

curity Report 2005 shows – been reduced in scale in Africa and other parts of the world. Hence the number of refugees has gone down. Should that trend be broken, migratory pressure would increase in turn.

Illegal migration poses multiple problems. First, the up-rooting of people in the countries of origin puts additional strain on fragile societies. Secondly, the migratory flows tend to create temporary basins when they encounter an obstacle on their road: Mali and Mauritania (before the journey goes on in small boats to the Canary Islands), Morocco (before the Straits of Gibraltar can be crossed or the barriers around Ceuta and Melilla be broken through), Tunisia and Libya (from where the route leads to Pantelleria, Lampedusa, Malta, Sicily, and mainland Italy), Egypt (into which an ever increasing number of migrants from Sudan and the Great Lakes area migrate), or Turkey (which serves as a springboard for the Balkan route). Most of these temporary host nations find themselves in a precarious economic and demographic situation. The additional migratory pressure is difficult to absorb, reduces further the already meagre perspectives of the local youth – and thus creates in turn additional migratory pressure. It also lays the groundwork for a religious radicalisation of young people – and hence for extremism and conflict. Finally, if the migrants succeed and reach the *banlieues* of Paris and Marseille, they face, more often than not, a life with no future. They risk to becoming easy prey for radical preachers – thereby deepening inter-cultural tensions and their own isolation. This is a vicious spiral indeed.

A related problem is posed by the rapid urbanisation. In 1800, only 2% of the world's population lived in cities. The figure rose to 49% in 2003, and is expected to grow to 60% by 2030 (cf. Table 2).²⁹ In 1950, there was only one city in the world with more than 10 million inhabitants. The UN estimates that this figure will grow by 2015 to 23 – 19 of them in the developing world.³⁰ Urban centres continue to exercise a strong attraction on a poor rural population. The cities offer, however, for most only meagre economic perspectives. The slum population is indeed growing more rapidly than the overall urban population.³¹ Today roughly one in six people on our planet live in an urban slum. And their number will explode (cf. Table 3). It will globally double from some 721.6 million in 1990 to 1,477.3 billion in 2020.³² Slum dwellers are confronted in cities like Rio and its likes with stark contrasts in wealth, little prospects except a depressing choice between occasional and low paid jobs, begging, drugs, prostitution and crime. Urban violence is, as a result, surging in many parts of the world.

Table 3. Slum Population Projection 1990-2020



The situation is particularly dramatic in Brazil. Gangs, mostly composed of youth, control entire segments of Rio de Janeiro. The police is not able (and does not dare) to penetrate these areas except in what effectively amounts to military style operations involving heavy weapons, helicopters and armour. The gangs are indeed often much better armed than the police. Some possess even armour. Between 1978 and 2000, more people, particularly children, died in armed violence in the slums of Rio de Janeiro than in Colombia, a country that is actually experiencing an internal war. In 2003 alone, some 39,000 Brazilians lost their lives to guns, according to data by the United Nations. The figure for the period 1979 to 2003 is a staggering estimated 500,000.³³ The problem is not restricted to Brazil alone: 48% of the cities in Latin America and the Caribbean have areas considered inaccessible or dangerous to the police.

Organised international crime is evolving into a threat of strategic proportion. Never before have so many drugs been produced³⁴ and trafficked. The resulting enormous criminal gains render organised crime able to outclass many police organ-

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isations in this world in modern weaponry and equipment. They also enable the dealers to corrupt the state structures that try to oppose them. Estimates concerning the net earnings of international organised crime are, by definition, guesswork. They vary between close to 1 trillion³⁵ and 1,5 trillion US dollars per year.

Conclusion 4: Conflict and climate change further increase migratory pressure on fragile societies. The migratory flows risk to destabilise the transit countries (and thus create additional migratory pressure). Even if successful, illegal migration tends to simply replace one set of problems with another, the result often being a life in a *banlieue* with no perspective. A very similar picture is presented by the growing urbanisation in many developing countries. If the root causes of these phenomena are not tackled, the potential for violence will grow – in our cities and around the world. At the same time, organised international crime, evolves into a threat of strategic dimensions – seriously challenging, if not outclassing and corrupting, the law enforcement sector in many countries.

²⁹United Nations Human Settlements Report (UNHSP), *Compendium of Human Settlement Statistics; Statistical Annex the Global Report and the State of the World's Cities Report 2003 and World Bank, 2005 World Development Report.*

³⁰UNHSP 2003.

³¹"Slum Estimates Data", *Compendium of Human Settlement Statistics; Statistical Annex to the Global Report and the State of the World's Cities Report 2001.*

³²UNHSP 2001.

³³<http://www.alternet.org/story/27279/>

³⁴In 2006, Afghanistan has seen an increase in total cultivation of opium of some 59%. In the troubled southern provinces alone, no less than 165,000 hectares were under cultivation – producing a harvest of some 6,100 tonnes of opium, representing a staggering 92% of total world supply. (UNDOC, *Annual Report 2007*, p. 36).

³⁵Financial Crimes Task Force, Global Organized Crime Project, The Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C.

Women and Children in an Insecure World

A particularly sad aspect of the shifting face of violence is the growing violence against the most vulnerable members of society – women and children. According to various estimates some 100 to 200 million women are demographically “missing” around the world.³⁶ The euphemism hides the fact that they have been killed for gender related reasons. Just to sustain such a “deficit”, some 2–3 million women need to be killed annually because of their gender. The real figures might even be higher. Violence against women is today one of the four main reasons why human beings die prematurely on planet Earth – together with war, disease, and hunger.

Women live in a very insecure world indeed. Many fall victim to gender selective abortion and infanticide (boys being preferred to girls). Others do not receive the same amount of food and medical attention as their brothers, fathers and husbands. Others again fall prey to sexual offenders, to “honour killings” and to acid attacks. Scores of women succumb to the special horrors and hardships that war and post-conflict situations reserve for them. A shocking number of women are killed within their own walls through domestic violence. Rape and sexual exploitation remain a reality for countless women. Millions are each year trafficked, some sold like cattle.

Most worrisome of all, violence against women has become an instrument of war. While rape has always been a sad companion of war, what we face in more recent times is different. The conflicts of disintegrating Yugoslavia have seen the systematic rape of an estimated 20,000 to 50,000 women and girls.³⁷ Some of the women were detained in what can only be described as rape camps. Many of them were raped systematically till they became pregnant from their tormentors. The objec-

tive was not only to humiliate the enemy men through their inability to protect their womenfolk, but to prepare the ground for “ethnic cleansing”.³⁸ It paid off.

Most worrisome of all, violence against women has become an instrument of war.

The seed of the Balkans wars brought terrible fruit in Africa. It is estimated that more than 250,000 women were raped during the conflict in Sierra Leone, 250,000 to 500,000 during that in Rwanda (cf. Table 4). It is to be feared that the same horrors will accompany the next conflict in Africa (and elsewhere). For, the use of rape as a weapon of war, and at a large scale, works. Confronted with that menace, civil populations turn in large numbers into refugees. Hardly any of the perpetrators is ever brought to justice.

Equally disturbing is the fact that what is left behind in the wake of such a catastrophe is a massive, continuing and even increasing level of daily, casual violence against women. In most African post-conflict situations rape and sexual violence remains endemic. The horrors are of an order of magnitude that virtually precludes the return to ordinary life, let alone reconciliation. Societies whose basic social fabric has been torn through mass rape prove, so it sadly seems, unable to repair the damage done – thus condemning the countries affected to hardship, conflict, and the lack of any real economic perspective.

The situation is hardly any better for children. As women and the elderly, children are in a conflict a particularly vulnerable segment of society. They suffer in many ways – through families torn apart, through horrors they witness, through rape and abduction. In many war-torn societies

the use – or better abuse – of children as child soldiers has become standard. The specifics vary; the overall pattern does not. Children are, in the best case, recruited “voluntarily” into armed forces or the armed formations of sub-state actors. Most often, the procedure is much more brutal – with children abducted, forced to witness the rape or murder of their loved ones, occasionally by being forced to commit these crimes themselves. Children are used

As women and the elderly, children are in a conflict a particularly vulnerable segment of society.

as cannon fodder, as sherpas, or as sex slaves.³⁹ The list of horrors is almost endless. And again: It pays. While the forcing of children of less than 15 years into military service is considered by the international community as a ware crime, few of the perpetrators are held responsible, hardly anyone is ever put to trial. To combat the practise proves extremely difficult.⁴⁰

And there is little hope for the future. Globalisation – which promises, in principle, an economic revolution from which we all should benefit – and the revolution in modern information technologies (which again should benefit all of us) hold, for the time being, a sinister prospect for the most vulnerable members of society. The collapse of the “Iron Curtain” has rendered the trafficking of human beings possible at a scale so far unknown. So has the increase in international air traffic. And so has the growth of international organised crime.

Reason for worrying gives also some aspects of the revolution in information technologies. While the IT revolution has proven a strong motor for economic

Table 4. War-Related Sexual Violence

Estimated incidence in selected conflicts:

Bangladesh (1971, 9 months of conflict)	250'000 to 4000'000 women
Sierra Leone (1991-2001)	more than 250'000 women
Rwanda (1994)	250'000 to 500'000 women
Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992, five months of conflict)	20'000 to 50'000 women
Liberia (1989-2003)	40-60% of all women and girls

³⁶Marie Vlachova and Lea Bion, *Women in an Insecure World: Violence against Women; Facts, Figures and Analysis*, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Geneva, 2005.

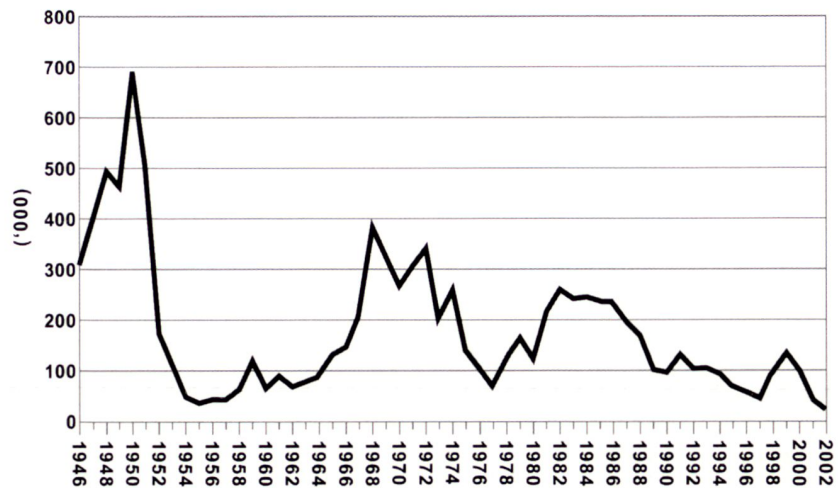
³⁷All data from Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and Amnesty International, *Women in an Insecure World, Facts and Figures on violence against women*, A Fact sheet, Geneva 2006.

³⁸Cf. Also Münkler, *op. cit.*, pp. 142–155.

³⁹For more details cf. “Child Soldiers”, DCAF Backgrounder, Geneva, 10/2006.

⁴⁰The most promising approach is that of “Geneva Call”, an organisation of outstanding merit already in the area of landmines, which specialises in convincing sub-state actors to observe international law. “Geneva Call”, under the energetic leadership of Elisabeth Reusse, tries for some time now to convince former perpetrators to renounce the use of child soldiers.

Table 5. Global Numbers of battle-deaths, 1946–2002



Source: Lacina and Gleditsch, 2004, in Human Security Report 2005

growth and prosperity, there is a dark side to the phenomenon. Whoever searches "Google" for the word "sex" will get a staggering 479 million websites proposed. No other entry can rival that score.⁴¹ It is a fact that sexual violence reported against women and children is on the rise.⁴² One can argue whether the increase in reported cases reflects simply more victims willing to come forward and testify or whether we are confronted with a genuine increase. Sadly,

While the IT revolution has proven a strong motor for economic growth and prosperity, there is a dark side to the phenomenon.

the latter interpretation is much more credible. The IT revolution is, in all probability, being misused in grand style by the pornographic industry, paedophiles and child molesters. With the IT revolution and the trend towards globalisation far from having run their course,⁴³ the potential for violence against women and children linked to them appears equally far from exhausted. There are, it seems, more horrors to come.

Conclusion 5: If during World War I nine out of ten victims in a conflict were soldiers and only one a civilian, these figures have been inverted over the last century. Today the civilian population suffers most in any conflict – and continues to suffer severely in the ensuing post-conflict phase. In particular, violence against women and children seems to be clearly on the rise. This phenomenon is significantly amplified by the revolution in information technologies (which provide totally new possibilities to the sex industry⁴⁴) and the rapid globalisation of our planet (which facilitates illegal migration and trafficking).

Synthesis

The trends described above are only indicative. Others could – and should – be added to the list of factors to create a growing potential for violence.

Let us just mention some of them: our inability to eradicate hunger, the global trend that the social fabric is put in many societies (though for very different reasons) to the test, the renewed appeal of nationalism, xenophobia, religious fundamentalism and Islamic Jihadism, the Shia-Sunni divide and the growing tensions between the Arab world and Iran, irredentism (from the Transnistrias of this world to southern Philippines), the fragility of many regimes and regional structures (how stable are the Arab

monarchies or the social order in Latin America?), the trend towards a growing privatisation of the security sector and all it implies,⁴⁵ the returning threat of pandemics and the spread of HIV, hooliganism, street violence and brutalising video games, the trend towards an increase in amok runs and "enlarged suicides" or even the bizarrely enough increased threat from piracy. Most importantly of all: the all too easily ignored reality that world views are increasingly divergent. Russia, China, the US, the European Union, the Islamic World, and other relevant international actors do neither necessarily share a joint vision for what the future should look like – nor are they, as the US "neo-cons" and democracy promoters believed, likely to move soon towards such a joint vision.

The list of problems we face is long – and it is steadily lengthening.

We have been asking, at the outset of this paper, four interrelated questions:

- Are we confronted by a shifting face of violence?
- Is the *potential* for violence growing?
- Are we doing the right thing to stop, or at least reduce, the potential for future violence?
- In short: Is time on our side?

Having analysed some of the trends we witness and mentioned others, we can answer these questions:

- We are indeed confronted by a shifting (or rather diversifying) face of violence. Even staying inside the overall typology of the "Human Security Report 2005", namely "Freedom from Fear", we must acknowledge that a focus on battle death and formal conflict dramatically misrepresents reality. Formal conflict may decline; violence is not. Human security is not on the rise, but remains a very precarious commodity indeed.
- What is even much more worrisome is the fact that the *potential* for violence seems

to be clearly growing – and that in alarming proportions. The picture painted by the "Human Security Report 2005" is, at best, the description of the famous eye of the hurricane. In real life, what comes after the "eye" might though actually be worse.

Of course, we need to do more of the same and support international and multilateral peace initiatives. But: This will *not* suffice.

Of course, the UN is doing a fine job. Of course, we need to do more of the same and support international and multilateral peace initiatives. But: This will *not* suffice. The *tsunami* of problems rolling our way requires not happy complacency, but action

⁴¹ "Peace" for instance fetches – with 236 million entries – barely half that catch, "Human Rights" a respectable 457 million sites, whereas "God" gets only 418 million hits.

⁴² Cf. In particular *Women in an Insecure World; Violence Against Women; Facts, Figures and Analysis*, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Geneva, 2005.

⁴³ It must be added that the IT revolution entails also other risks: IT knowledge and skills will be in the future one of the most important factors for differentiating between those countries that succeed and those that fail. In this context it must be remembered that half of the population of Africa has not yet made a phone call. Should this cyber gap widen, additional tension is inevitable. At the same time, the growing dependence of the most advanced countries invites cyber terrorism and gives information warfare a steadily growing role.

⁴⁴ It is estimated that 3 out of 4 downloads are worldwide of pornographic nature.

⁴⁵ Cf. Alan Bryden and Marina Caparini, *Private Actors and Security Governance*, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, LIT Verlag, Münster, 2006.

– of a scale and to a degree of integration between different policy levels so far unheard of. We need what the Germans call a "Gesamtschau." And: we must be aware of the fact that there are, in a world that is globalising, no longer any "strategic Ghettos", i.e. regions whose fate we can ignore because they do not have the ability to impact on us. There are, in French, two words for what the Anglo-Saxon world calls "globalisation": "Globalisation" which has, above all, an economic meaning and "mondialisation" which has a heavy political and societal connotation. Both ideas are relevant; "mondialisation" as much, if not more, than the narrower term "globalisation."

● Yes, we are doing some things right – but we do not enough things right. Above all: we are only about to understand the complex interrelationship and inter-linkages between the different problems we face. As long as we do not develop an overall strategy able to cope with the very complex set of interwoven problems that we are challenged by and as long as we are not able to break down that overall strategy into a set of practical steps getting us somewhere, we are bound to fail.

● And hence: No, time is *not* on our side. If we do not act now, the problems that are currently building up, risk to overwhelm us – and that in not too distant a future.

Implications

First, we cannot look at the new threats and challenges in isolation, but need to develop a strategic, comprehensive vision. We need, at the political level, an overarching approach. "Kyoto" is not only an environmental – or an economic issue – but at the very heart of the security debate as well.⁴⁶

There cannot be any development
without security. Nobody invests in a
war zone. Yet without development
there cannot be in the longer term
any security either.

The United Nations have made a step in the right direction with Secretary General Kofi Annan's report "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" of 21 March 2005.⁴⁷ It states that development, security and human rights are intrinsically linked issues. There cannot be any development without security.⁴⁸ Nobody invests in a war zone. Yet without development there cannot be in the longer term any security either. People with empty stomachs and no perspective will take to their Kalshnikovs. And: In order

to build respect for human rights – as well as to build eventually the basis for democracy – both a secure environment and credible economic perspectives are needed – as development and security can only come about, if human rights are respected.

The implications are important. Democracy promotion as the main strategic tool, as argued by the US "neo-cons", puts the cart in front of the ox. Development cooperation is, if seen in isolation, not the answer either. Peace support operations (PSO) are needed, but will, if not accompanied *from the outset* by a whole panoply of "soft" programmes that assure the emergence of stable political, economic and social structures lead only to international trusteeship type mandates of an undeter-

⁴⁶This was clearly evidenced when on 17 April 2007 the UN Security Council held a session on the implications of global warming.

⁴⁷UN document A/59/2005.

⁴⁸Global development cooperation funds today amount to some 106 billion US Dollars per year. According to estimates a civil war costs, depending on the specific circumstances, anywhere between 5 and 54 billion US Dollars per year. There are currently some 90 conflicts of that type going on around the world. The mathematics are simple: If development cooperation is not based on a solid policy to assure first of all, security the money spent on it will be the proverbial drop of water on a hot stone.

Table 6. CURRENT PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

Mission	Established	Troops	Military Observers	Police	International Civilians	Local Civilians	UN Volunteers	Total Personnel	Fatalities	Budget (US\$)
UNTSO	May 1948	0	154	0	107	122	0	383	48	29,961,200(2006)
UNMOGIP	January 1949	0	44	0	21	49	0	114	11	7,919,100(2006)
UNFICYP	March 1964	853	0	64	40	103	0	1,060	176	46,270,400
UNDOF	June 1974	1,019	0	0	38	103	0	1,160	42	39,865,200
UNIFIL	March 1978	12,908	0	0	163	310	0	13,381	259	350,866,600
MINURSO	April 1991	28	195	6	103	137	24	493	14	45,935,000
UNOMIG	August 1993	0	128	12	99	183	1	423	11	33,377,900
UNMIK	June 1999	0	37	2,028	494	2,021	146	4,726	46	217,962,000
MONUC	November 1999	16,620	722	1,048	940	2,051	587	21,968	103	1,094,247,900
UNMEE	July 2000	1,792	221	0	151	195	51	2,410	17	137,385,100
UNMIL	September 2003	13,849	207	1,201	524	931	226	16,938	89	714,877,300
UNOCI	April 2004	7,853	200	1,138	371	524	228	10,314	29	472,889,300
MINUSTAH	June 2004	6,799	0	1,802	431	718	174	9,924	25	489,207,100
UNMIS	March 2005	8,759	577	642	851	2,250	184	13,263	18	1,079,534,400
UNMIT	August 2006	12	21	1,472	161	394	217	2,277	1	170,221,100
Total:		70492	2506	9413	4494	10091	1838	98834	889	About \$5.28 billion

UNTSO - UN Truce Supervision Organization
UNMOGIP - UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
UNFICYP - UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNDOF - UN Disengagement Observer Force
UNIFIL - UN Interim Force in Lebanon
MINURSO - UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
UNOMIG - UN Observer Mission in Georgia
UNMIK - UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

MONUC - UN Organization Mission in the Dem. Rep. of the Congo
UNMEE - United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea
UNMIL - United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNOCI - United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
MINUSTAH - United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
UNMIS - United Nations Mission in the Sudan
UNMIT - United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste

Source: United Nations Department of Public Information

mined (and in the long term politically, financially and militarily untenable) nature. A credible and realistic exit strategy must be part of every PSO, if that mission is to succeed.

There is growing international recognition of these realities. Most notably, the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has adopted in 2004 Security Systems Reform Guidelines and then built on them a corresponding "Implementation Framework." The OECD has, thus, recognised the link between security and development and fully integrated Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Security Sector Governance (SSG) into the world of development cooperation.⁴⁹

Secondly, with respect to armed forces and military power, it is time to remember Clausewitz for whom war was the continuation of policy by other means – but *not a substitute for policy*.

We are, in the military realm, indeed witnessing a growing number of paradoxes:

- Concepts like the "Revolution in Military Affairs" (RMA), "Transformation" or "Network-Centric Warfare" have brought about a genuine revolution in the conduct of battle. Military engagements can today be won decisively and with a minimum of what is euphemistically called "collateral damage." Verdun is history indeed. Yet at the same time, conflicts cannot be decided any longer by military means alone, or even primarily by military means. It may be increasingly easy to decide a battle; but it is obviously also increasingly difficult to win peace. The empirical evidence – from Kabul to Baghdad or Israel's failed 2006 campaign in Lebanon – is so strong that it needs no further comment.

- The rapid reaction capability of armed forces has been continuously improved – up to the point that, at least theoretically, substantial military forces would be able to be projected into a crisis region within days, if not hours. Yet at the same time the political will to project such forces is waning – decisions taking not hours or days, but weeks, if not months. To put it differently: From the perspective of the ground, the real point is, in most cases, not whether a force can be projected swiftly, but whether it can be deployed at all and whether it can be sustained over an extended period of time.

- Both NATO and the European Union have equipped themselves in the aftermath of the Cold War with force structures that impress on paper: NATO "Response Forces" and EU "Battle Groups." The real problem with these units is, however, that the probability that they will ever be deployed is rapidly waning. We are living increasingly in a world not of alliances but of ad hoc coalitions of the able and the willing. Neither NATO nor the EU is very

likely to develop the deep political consensus needed to deploy their power projection tools in a routine fashion. Real deployment patterns and strategic theory will in all probability ever more diverge. There is, in short, a growing gap between what exists on paper and what will be deployed.

- Put to the test of time, *ad hoc* coalitions have, moreover, proven to be brittle. The real problem of interoperability is neither technical nor military, but political.

- There is a strong interest in power projection capabilities, but little thought about exit strategies. This is mirrored, to some extent, in the growing number of peacekeepers. If time would be on our side, that number should not grow, but decline. It is time to focus not only at the likely missions of armed forces, but to develop a comprehensive, integrated view of what these missions should achieve and what additional – i.e. non-military – tools are needed to render this desired outcome more probable.

With respect to military force, the technological revolution has been not a friend, but a foe. The fascination with what is technologically possible has led to an erosion of the understanding of what is reasonable, what is needed, and what should, above all, be avoided. We have seen technology replace strategy, technical gimmickry to throw out of the window wisdom (such as to leave the commander on the spot in charge). Real time communication capa-

We have seen technology replace strategy, technical gimmickry to throw out of the window wisdom.

bilities at a level never preceded in history has led to generals on an island in the Indian Ocean leading infantry squad operations in the Hindukush.⁵⁰ One shudders at the thought what Winston Churchill, a brilliant student of military art, would have done, had he had such technology at his disposal – and clearly not everybody is a Churchill.

Similarly, technological revolution in the form of handy-cams means that security forces around the globe have henceforth to reckon with the fact that whatever they do might be on CNN (or Al Jazeera) within less than an hour. In times where the political will to sustain operations is the key to success, this is bound both to spell trouble and to put burdens on armed forces that are very difficult to cope with. We face today the reality that in places like Afghanistan or Iraq armed forces are engaged *simultaneously and within the same geographical area* in enforcement operations, stabilisation operations, and humanitarian assistance. To keep those balls simultaneously in the air is not

easy even under the best of circumstances – not for the troops, let alone for those who are at the receiving end. Yet every mistake will count. Political decisions can, in the world of today, be caused by incidents at squad level.

With battle fronts becoming global and with decision mechanisms impacted upon by the evening news, the military are bound to lose – if left to their own devices. This trend is reinforced by several factors. There is the reality, experienced by coalition troops in Afghanistan and Iraq on a daily basis, that overall military superiority does not translate necessarily into a clear cut tactical superiority on the battlefield. On the ground and in the tactical arms race of hit and run operations, the United States finds itself to enjoy an edge over their foes that proves ever slimmer.

Similarly, as the US is rediscovering that what counts on the battlefield is not only, and perhaps not even primarily, technology, but the simple infantryman. What truly counts is even more precious: the deployable infantryman. Most current conflicts require long-term international commitments. To sustain these deployments is a challenge – even if these conflicts remain dormant (like Cyprus). It becomes a genuine nightmare, if they are anything else but dormant. Today, to engage in peace support operations (PSO), let alone in more robust forms of military commitments, implies a willingness to accept casualties. Contrary to superficial wisdom, most societies have that stamina – *if they are convinced that the cause is worthy, that national interests are at stake, and that there is light at the end of tunnel*. Military operations cannot be conducted in a political vacuum. Public support is crucial.

This leads us straight to a third and final implication: If we are confronted by a growing potential for violence, we need in our response – not only at the strategic, but also at the operational and tactical level – a

The challenge of the future is not military, but complex.

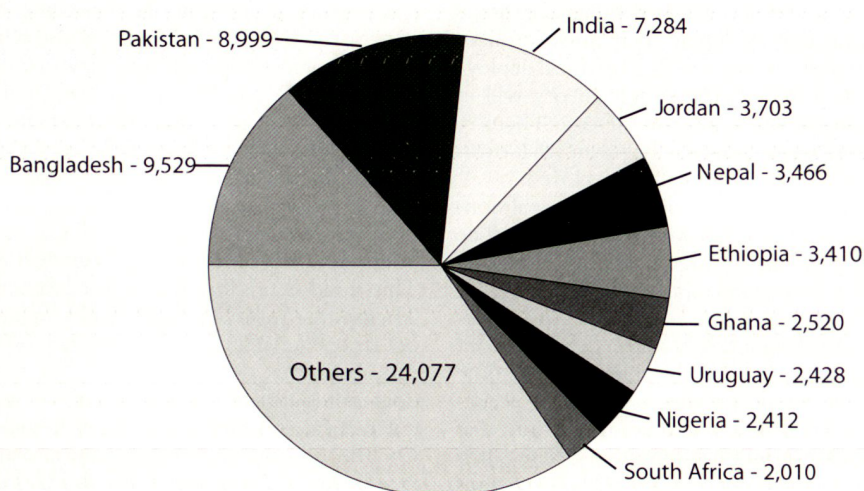
fully integrated approach. The challenge of the future is not military, but complex. The response to the problem cannot be simply entrusted to armed forces alone, but must be integrated in nature – integrating all aspects of the security sector (armed forces,

⁴⁹ A step that the IFI, notably the World Bank still needs to take.

⁵⁰ Cf. Sean Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die; the Untold Story of Operation Anaconda*, Berkley Books, New York, 2005.

Table 7. Top 10 Troop Contributors

As of 31 December 2005



Source: United Nations Peace Operations. Year in Review 2005

police, border security, intelligence agencies, and other elements that are part of the state monopoly of legitimate force), development assistance and cooperation, state building tools, local capacity building and empowerment, and close cooperation between state and non-state actors, notably NGOs.

Armed forces have been trained first in combined, then in joint operations. What is needed is an ability to be part of *integrated* operations. This remains, all too often, *terra incognita* – not only for the military, but for all security sector components involved. The cooperation between the various elements of a post-conflict reconstruction mission cannot be assured on an *ad hoc* basis on the ground. That cooperation must,

Armed forces have been trained first in combined, then in joint operations. What is needed is an ability to be part of integrated operations.

first of all, be built into the very planning of the mission. Armed forces, international police components, border security specialists, intelligence agencies, and all the other elements that form the myriad of means needed for an integrated crisis management or peacebuilding mission should integrate SSR cooperation into their basic training – for different security sector components have not only different missions and roles, but also very different institutional philosophies, capabilities, and operational approaches. These “cultural” differences should not be painfully discovered on the ground, but be understood – and ironed

out – before an operation even begins. We need to train not PSO troops, but peacebuilding specialists from a coherent set of institutions that are able to form integrated, effective answers to the real problems on the ground – and which are, therefore, able to initiate in a post-conflict situation change on the ground that is likely to render that very mission temporary, not permanent. We need to move from bandaging problems to solve them.

The ability to effectively cooperate with non-state actors, including NGOs, is in this context essential. And so is the ability to deal with corruption. All those who will participate in crisis management missions, peace support operations or integrated missions need to be trained in it. The ability to transform, build, or re-build an efficient local security sector under effective civilian oversight based on democratic principles is a crucial factor for the success or failure of a mission. It is also the very heart of every exit strategy.

Every international peacebuilding, peace support, or crisis management operation should indeed be a tool that serves a broader, longer-term strategy that aims at restoring first a reasonable degree of human security, secondly leading to the creation/restoration of a reasonable chance for economic development, and thirdly putting in place the bases for the development for working political processes of a democratic nature. In real life, these three challenges will have often to be mastered simultaneously.

The concepts of Security Sector (or Systems) Reform (SSR) and Security Sector Governance (SSG) are increasingly seen as a key element in coping with the growing global potential for violence. SSR and SSG are not only important tools in post-con-

flikt reconstruction and peacebuilding, but also for conflict prevention, conflict transformation and conflict solution. Most international actors have adopted – or are in the process of shaping – corresponding strategies and approaches. Many countries have, at the national level, adopted respective strategic concepts and created inter-ministerial implementation mechanisms.⁵¹

The concepts of Security Sector (or Systems) Reform (SSR) and Security Sector Governance (SSG) are increasingly seen as a key element in coping with the growing global potential for violence.

The challenge faced by the international community is to better combine soft and hard power, to renounce the temptation to ask too much from the armed forces (and ruining them by the same token), to diversify the available tool kit, and to apply to complex issues much more sophisticated answers.

The United Kingdom that has coined, some years ago, the very concepts of SSR and SSG has created a whole series of quality institutions providing sterling advice and operate on the basis of a whole of government approach.

Similar trends can be seen everywhere. The European Union has adopted under the British and Austrian Presidencies a comprehensive SSR strategy (linking development, soft and hard security components of the Union) whose implementation is cautiously under way. The United Nations has, within the framework of the overall reform of the United Nations, given prominence to the integrating concept of “peacebuilding”, and created a corresponding “Peacebuilding Commission.” The UN Security Council has adopted under the Slovak Presidency, on 20 February 2007, a “Presidential Statement” that for the first time formally recognizes the concept of SSR as a key element of post-conflict peacebuilding. The OSCE is currently, through its Security Committee, looking at what an SSG approach might imply for the organisation. NATO pursues cautiously the same line of reasoning through its “Part-

⁵¹In the case of Switzerland: the Interdepartmental working groups on SSR and on Regional Military Cooperation, both created in 2006.

nership Action Plan in Defence Institution Building" (PAP DIB). Similar moves are under way in the Council of Europe, the West African community (ECOWAS) and other regional or sub-regional organisations.

The trends are, thus, positive; yet there needs still much to be done. In particular, it cannot be that the SSR/SSG approaches of the international community vary widely. More and more often, the EU is picking up a mission from either NATO or the UN. Increasingly global and regional (or sub-regional) organisations are called upon to cooperate. There is a need for continuity – and there is a need for coherence. The United Nations and the European Union, main providers of both hard and soft security assistance, are called upon to play a particularly important role in this respect.⁵²

But this cannot be *à la longue* an issue where the North provides standards – let alone recipes – to the South. If the challenges we face are to be surmounted, solutions and approaches need to be found that can gain global ownership. There are encouraging signs in that direction, most notably the development of some sub-regional organisations such as ECOWAS. Additional steps will be needed, the most important of which would be the strengthening and further development of the African Union.

Switzerland has moved, too, when it created, in October 2000, a dedicated centre of excellence for SSR and SSG, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF).⁵³ An international foundation with currently 49 member states, DCAF combines, as the only institution in the world, conceptual, analytical and operational capabilities. It is used by the international community as a centre of excellence and has been invited to contribute to the evolving SSR/SSG strategies, respectively the thinking and new approaches by the United Nations,⁵⁴ the European Union, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, OECD DAC, and NATO.⁵⁵ Its research division provides every year some 10–20 books and dozens of studies specifically tailored for clearly defined target groups (if not outright commissioned by governments or international organisations). Some of its publications have been translated into close to 40 languages. On the ground, the Centre is conducting every year some 100 projects – ranging from assisting governments in drafting laws and national security documents to parliamentary assistance, all aspects of security sector reform and civil society empowerment.

In sum: The time is clearly ripe for integrated, strategic approaches that can claim local, regional and global ownership and are able to offer a coherent answer to the phenomenon of a shifting face of violence. Switzerland has evolved into a country that is playing, in this key area, an increasingly active role. The DDPS (Federal Department of Defense, Civil Protection and Sports) has played, in this crucial area, a key role. ●

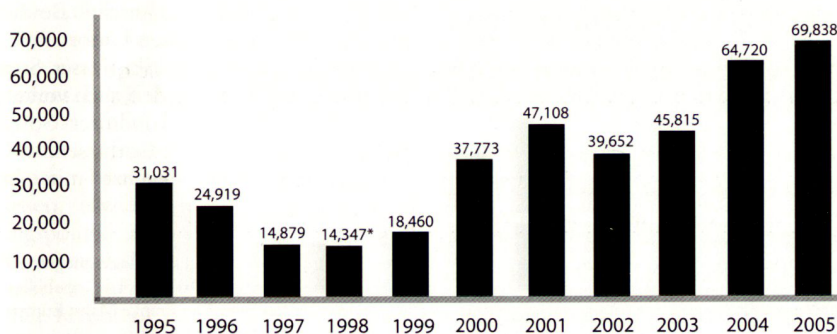
⁵²The German EU Presidency has been initiating, successfully, a discussion on this very issue.

⁵³For more information about DCAF cf. www.dcaf.ch

⁵⁴UNSC Presidential Statement of 20 February 2007.

⁵⁵Partnership Action Plan in Defence Institution Building (PAP DIB).

Table 8. Surge in Troops: 1995 - 2005



Source: United Nations Peace Operations. Year in Review 2005