



Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of
Armed Forces (DCAF)

Policy Paper - №18

The Shifting Face of Violence

Alyson J.K. Bailes, Keith Krause, Theodor H. Winkler

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About the Authors

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. NEW VIOLENCE OR SHIFTING VIOLENCE?.....	1
WHAT VIOLENCE?	1
NEW, GROWING OR SHIFTING?.....	2
WHAT ELSE TO DO	4
II. NEW FORMS OF VIOLENCE - IMPLICATIONS FOR KEY SECURITY ACTORS	7
WAR, VIOLENCE AND INSECURITY	8
IS LETHAL VIOLENCE DECLINING	9
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS.....	14
III. THE SHIFTING FACE OF VIOLENCE	15
TRENDS	16
SYNTHESIS.....	30
IMPLICATIONS.....	32
LIST OF ACRONYMS	39

Preface

The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) assists the international community in promoting good governance and reform of the security sector. To accomplish this mission, DCAF conducts research on good practices, encourages the development of appropriate norms at the national and international levels, and provides targeted policy advice to a range of national and international actors. The Centre also assists interested parties through applying practical tools, providing in-country advice and developing assistance programmes that operationalise the norms and good practices identified through policy-relevant research.

Part of this mandate necessarily involves staying abreast of the broader developments in security that will shape DCAF's future work and the security sector reform agenda more broadly. Thus, this publication is directly linked to our contribution to the 7th International Security Forum (ISF) held in Zurich in 2006 where a DCAF-organised workshop contextualised and assessed the implications of recent and noted changes in violent conflict. The articles submitted here by three noted experts have been developed from the ISF conference contributions with the explicit goal of presenting a variety of differing perspectives on recent trends in conflict and security.

With the goal of elaborating on the theme of shifting forms of violence, DCAF has drawn on the resources of two highly skilled collaborators: Alyson J.K. Bailes, a career diplomat and analyst, uses her extensive experience to gauge the nature of so-called 'new' threats to security and to present certain public policy guidelines useful in meeting these challenges; Keith Krause presents an academic's view of how recent trends in the nature of conflict can be understood against the wider backdrop of human violence, highlighting the need to consider the scale of both direct and indirect violence. Finally, Ambassador Theodor Winkler brings to bear his expertise in security matters generally and SSR in particular, offering an interpretation of the changing nature of threats to security in an increasingly globalised world, and an appraisal of the parameters of a global response.

While contributing a refined understanding of the broader context in which DCAF's work takes place, it is hoped that this publication will also prove relevant to a broad audience beyond the diverse array of partners with whom DCAF already works. Gaining a deeper understanding of the stakes of conflict as it evolves and changes will be a key determinant of future policy options to strengthen governance of the security sector and assist in meaningful reform.

New Violence or Shifting Violence?¹

Alyson J.K. Bailes

What violence?

This a good time in history to take a new and broader look at the problem of human violence. Since the time of the Cold War when (at least in the Northern hemisphere) the agenda was all about massive military violence between states, Western security policy has been rediscovering the importance of other threats to human life, liberty and happiness. I say ‘rediscovering’ because this full range of violent behaviour has always existed on the Earth, only it was concentrated in regions and societies that we had little to do with (or possibly lost our intimate contact with through the process of decolonisation); or it took shapes that we tended to compartmentalise and suppress from our security policy discourse when it happened in our own homes or on our own doorsteps. In any case, the first decade after the Cold War was coloured by the Western ‘rediscovery’ of non-state sources and methods of armed conflict, while the second decade has so far been driven by a new focus on threats posed by much smaller groups of individuals – the so-called ‘asymmetrical’ threats of terrorism potentially linked with the use of mass destruction technologies.

We have now moved on far enough, however, to start to see that there are two big potential pitfalls for policy in over-concentrating on non-state violence linked with armed conflict and ‘asymmetrical’ threats alone. First, there has been too much of a tendency to roll this set of problems together and to approach them consciously or unconsciously with the habits of thought formed by fifty years of East–West strategic competition. It is all too easy to treat all brands of terrorism alike; to assume that terrorists are always to blame for conflict rather than vice versa; to ignore the important analytical and strategic distinctions – I do not say moral ones! – between the terrorists themselves and the kind of states that support them; to view terrorism in the way we used to view an enemy bloc and an enemy ideology; and to believe that it can and should be defeated (or that conflict-ridden states can be converted to stable and democratic ones) by military power alone. The wars of Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon have shown so many examples of how such approaches can go wrong that I hardly need to say any more here.

The second risk, however, is that we divert our attention or detach our security thinking too much from other things that threaten human beings with premature death or that threaten to make their lives unbearable. To start from the other extreme of the human security spectrum: disease may seem a comparatively natural way of death and a reasonable risk for all humans to face, but we now know that it is often preventable – especially when it arises from hunger, exposure, a polluted environment, lack of drugs

¹ Speaking notes, International Security Forum, 26 October 2006.

and care, or the impact of an international epidemic which good international policies could have curtailed. Natural disasters may be even harder to avoid, but it is generally considered today that states and institutions have a duty to forecast, and limit, and help people after them as well as they can. However, I would like to highlight especially today another range of risks and threats for humanity that lie in between these categories of essentially *non-intentional* damage, and the more familiar threats of war, conflict and asymmetric violence that I mentioned at the start.

One sub-set of such intentional human damage concerns, as it were, the *simulation* of natural disasters and accidents: through the deliberate sabotaging of crucial infrastructures; cutting of vital supply routes; the polluting of crops, food and drink, or deliberate spreading of epidemic disease itself. I mention these because I sometimes have an uneasy feeling that we are underplaying the likelihood and impact of such *indirect* use of violence against persons and societies in our concentration on the kinds of terrorism that equate more directly to murder. However, I think it even more important to bring into our analysis other things that are even more rarely drawn into the scope of public security discourse as such: starting with murder itself and other violent crime, through chronic social violence in the form of tribal feuding, vendettas and honour killings, drunken ‘Saturday night’ fighting and football hooliganism, through family violence which includes the toleration of kids fighting among themselves, to what we might call ‘top-down’ violence in the form of violent oppression by the state and the use of violent punishment both by the state itself and in schools. Having offered this personal and perhaps rather eccentric definition of the ‘violence spectrum’, I would like to use the rest of my time to talk, first, about whether all forms of so-called new, non-state or non-traditional violence are in fact new, or growing, or rather shifting in pattern; and secondly about some very general guidelines for public policy in trying to get to grips with the resulting challenges.

New, Growing or Shifting?

First of all, you may already guess from my presentation that I would like to aim off from some of the shock and emotion that Western commentators have sometimes attached to the so-called new forms of violence. I would ask a mainly Western audience to remind itself that even in Europe the idea of restricting responsibility for armed violence to nation-states and to the formal clashes between them has only become entrenched within the last three centuries or so. Our own societies have continued to live with many other kinds of internalised violence, including some very persistent and cruel non-state confrontations, while societies using violence in tribal or vendetta style have persisted in most other parts of the world – and even pretty close to NATO and EU borders. So, if we find ourselves returning today to focus on and worry about the more non-Westphalian or pre-Westphalian forms of violence, I would suggest we are travelling in a loop rather than in some new straight line of evolution; even if it is right to acknowledge that old and familiar challenges can be given a new edge by environmental changes like globalisation and technological advance.

Overall, it would be extremely difficult and probably futile to try to calculate whether human violence is growing or declining today. The comparison is difficult because the

Cold War set-up froze most manifestations of state-to-state violence in Europe even while often encouraging them elsewhere. But if anything had gone wrong we would have been looking at deaths in the tens and hundreds of millions perhaps within a few days, which is a dimension of risk far beyond anything we worry about now. Since the early 1990s there has also been an overall downward trend in major terrorist incidents, until the major one-off peak on 11 September 2001 and the opening of the terrorist front in Iraq where more than half of last year's total incidents took place (according to the United States' own reckoning). That last point should remind us, however, that the bulk of terrorist killings happen and always have happened in less-developed and conflict-torn nations outside the West, just as rates of murder and preventable deaths from disease are also chronically higher in those settings. Today's declining number of open armed conflicts are tending to cause a proportional growth in civilian deaths and suffering per soldier killed, usually due to deliberate tactics by the combatants who try to overawe and fragment the local society or even to destroy it in the case of genocide. At the same time, countries that avoid conflict and enjoy some economic growth and democratic progress are tending (as they have always done in history) to see clear and continuing improvements in terms of crime rates, tribal and social violence, as well as in reduced infant mortality and longer life expectancy – although growth can also lead to greater income differentials that stimulate robbery and other economic crime. We would probably be more aware of these corrective trends in the overall audit-sheet of violence if they were not so often obscured by human own-goals like the drug culture and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

That last point may also raise the question of whether there is a human or social instinct, not just to inflate the importance of remaining dangers after some larger ones have been removed or reduced, but also (consciously or unconsciously) to maintain something like a constant level of risk by introducing new violent behaviours when necessary. Studies have certainly suggested that rates of non-political murder, suicide and violent crime were lower in Northern Ireland at the height of the troubles and have been creeping up since the progress made in a settlement. In the general study of conflict it has become a commonplace to note the risks associated with the 'spoiler' problem by which actors who are 'squeezed out', left out or otherwise disenchanted by a peace settlement can start fighting all over again in new forms and localities. This mechanism is of course also one of the most common ways in which new terrorists are born. Besides such direct 'displacement' of violence from one form to another, we should note the growing possibilities for 'diasporas' of violence, or diffusion of violence, that are created by the very fact of globalisation – with its extended interdependencies and mutual vulnerabilities between societies that were never before connected, and its freedom for people to travel and to interact virtually in ways never dreamed of before. Here the 2002 US National Security Strategy was actually quite accurate when it described the modern terrorist threat as arising 'at the crossroads of radicalism and technology' – if we can visualise this crossroads existing both within single societies where people are mixed and divided in new ways, and at the level of a kind of globalised super-society.

Just a further quick comment on where technology fits in, since this is something that my own institute (SIPRI) has always studied and where we always strive to adjust our own research focus to the changing patterns of violence. My own hunch is that the

technological driver is far less important for the non-state and socialised forms of violence than it has traditionally been for wars and preparations for war between nation-states. It is a cliché that the ‘poor man’s weapons of mass destruction’ predominantly used in internal conflicts are very basic items like small arms and mines that are relatively easy to make locally, if not available through trade; while even quite sophisticated combatants or terrorists when facing a strong enemy may quite logically opt for so-called ‘dumb’ and low-tech responses in order to exploit vulnerabilities in their enemies’ high-tech armouries (and especially perhaps in the human factor). Terrorists engaged in a constant evolutionary battle with the forces of counter-terrorism will also lean towards the unexpected, whether that means using liquid explosives or a whole civil airliner as a weapon. In short, what is helping the purveyors of all kinds of non-state and social violence to increase the levels of damage if they so wish is not so much the level of technology as such, as much as the greater diffusion and availability of technology: multiplied by the fact that so many civilian and supposedly innocent products and delivery methods now have double or multiple uses including destructive ones, and aggravated by the growing openness and vulnerabilities of different kinds of target societies – whether we think of a weak developing state already terminally stressed by HIV/AIDS, or an overcrowded rich nation where the majority of people depend on a dangerously few lines of supply. The challenge this poses for any kind of preventive or restraining policy is that if we focus (as has been normal before) on cutting off the supply of anything that might be used as a weapon and might reach the wrong hands, we would not only have to turn off a huge number of taps (including those now controlled by non-state and non-Western producers), but – if we succeed in doing so – we may block the transfer of many necessary and needful commodities and technologies to precisely the parts of the global economy that need them most, if they are to develop and compete and if overall growth is to be maintained. We face here a thousand times over, and on a world scale, the same sort of dilemma as when we ask whether gun control is so important that we have to destroy the whole sport of hunting and any other legitimate uses that society may have for private weapons in order to achieve it. All this is not a reason to do nothing but it does mean that the whole concept of strategic controls on weapons and dangerous technologies is in need of a radical overhaul – and we at SIPRI would say that it needs to move in the direction of much more universal, inclusive controls, bringing in as many states as possible as co-owners and enlisting the whole business sector as an active partner.

What Else to Do?

The biggest single point I would like to make to those in international institutions or single nations who are trying to limit and reduce the damage from all so-called new forms of violence is to recognise that the great majority of those who use violent means in disordered and diffused, socialised and personalised contexts are doing it *because they want to*. Clearly this does not apply to press-ganged child soldiers and the like, but it is still a valid general contrast with traditional armies and wars where people are commanded and paid to kill by their ruling government and often kill people that they personally do not hate. This helps to explain why, of the two classic ways of stopping the state use of violence, *deterrence* hardly works at all and sheer physical *compulsion* seems remarkably

inefficient. One of the most obvious problems with the latter is that it forces the people of violence to go to ground and identify more intimately with the broader ranks of society, so that only crushing society itself starts to look like a solution – and this is a blatant road to escalation, besides opening the way to the other reprehensible form of violence known as state oppression. (Note that very little was heard about terrorism or violent crime in the strict Communist countries of the past or in North Korea now!)

Remedies that theoretically could work better against personally motivated violence obviously include enforceable laws operating at the individual level, with proportionate penalties – which is why post-conflict justice and the *legal* framework for handling international terrorism are far more than just subjects of specialist interest, and why methods of response that themselves break laws are always a bad idea. But we also need to make the most of the potential of plain human persuasion and human bribery – the former clearly to be preferred, but the latter not to be underestimated. This brings us to a range of fairly clichéd generic solutions such as

- giving people alternative non-violent ways, economic and even cultural, as well as political, to compete and to provoke change – which is why democratisation and its sub-set, democratic security sector reform, are a genuinely vital part of the picture, although they are neither the only approach nor a reliable silver bullet;
- hearts-and-minds techniques (which could well include an element of economic bribery) for splitting violent factions and individuals away from society at large; recognising and using the crucial role of communications and media in the shorter term and education in the longer term; and so on.

I would add my personal hunch that we have not yet looked seriously enough at the role that structures of peaceful *regional integration* can play in providing safety valves to reduce the various pressures for violent settlement of differences within, as well as between countries; or at least, in ensuring cooperative reactions by neighbours that will corral and contain specific hotbeds of violence. Europe is carrying out this kind of experiment in the Balkans and needs to stick with it for the sake of offering wider lessons, as well as for Europe's own manifest security interests.

As a researcher by trade, I must also add that I think research and understanding of the whole spectrum of different brands and their interplay still has an enormous way to go and that it is crucial to push it further: because so long as we do not know the real roots and paths of causation at the most basic human level, any levers that we apply to try to get solutions may at best yield a very low 'energy efficiency' and in the worst case – even when the action takes the form of the most apparently altruistic 'peace missions' – may only escalate, multiply and displace violence in all the ways I have noted already.

Last but not least, as a researcher from an institute known for its high principles, I have to ask: are we sure that we, the Western authorities and institutions, are not sending mixed messages about violence from our declared policies combined with our actual behaviour? It is the old story about whether the death penalty really discourages murder or legitimises it by putting the state in the killer's role. Any use of violence by even the

best of good guys not only encourages retaliation in kind, but risks in more subtle ways glamourising this technique and keeping it in the same focal plane in both interstate and inter-person transactions that it has held for so many centuries already. I am not only aiming this remark at the US Administration, which is (for instance) currently attempting the rather difficult policy task of persuading China not to build its future strength on military foundations while at the same time making the maintenance of the United States' absolute military supremacy an open and central precept of its own security strategy. I am also asking myself whether we should be happy about the fact that the EU's common security and defence policy has become one of the few growth industries in Brussels since the collapse of the proposed EU Constitution, and is certainly far better known worldwide than any EU policy or programme directed at limiting or avoiding the use of armaments. Of course, any suggestion that we should rely less on violence or spend less on arms ourselves while we feel ourselves surrounded by ever more and nastier forms of violence from other people risks sounding like a counsel of almost religious idealism. But the ultimate religious idealism of 'turning the other cheek' was invented in a region and a society just as painfully divided and violence-torn as anything we witness in the Middle East today.

New Forms of Violence - Implications for Key Institutional Actors

Keith Krause

Much has been written about contemporary transformations of war and political violence, including on civil wars, interstate conflict, communal conflicts, political violence and terrorism. Most scholars agree that there has been a transformation in contemporary war, and perhaps even a 'revolution in military affairs'. Yet there are good reasons to look more closely at so-called 'new forms of violence' to sort out what is and is not new in contemporary conflicts. Before examining the implications of contemporary forms of political violence for international actors and institutions, it is worth unpacking some of the main issues at stake in any assertion about new forms of political violence.

Perhaps the most useful way to do this is to focus on the violence itself, and to begin by situating the chilling calculus of violent death in a slightly larger historical perspective. As scholars of world politics we must not – and I want to stress this point – restrict ourselves to the study of war, and especially not to interstate war. Instead, we should take the problem from its most human or individual perspective, and look first at lethal armed violence, in all its forms, and whatever its causes. This seems appropriate also given that one aspect of the mandate of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) is to engage with precisely those institutions that focus on the control, regulation and reduction of violent conflict, within and between states.

I will structure what follows around five general points that ought to be considered in any discussion of so-called new forms of violence, which, even if presented somewhat provocatively, paint a somewhat contradictory picture of how we ought to think about contemporary conflict and violence:

- historically, war has not been the main source of lethal violence or physical insecurity; and it is not in the contemporary world either;
- lethal armed violence might be declining (but evidence is not completely convincing over the long term) – but if so, this is only happening in particular places and under certain circumstances, and we need to better understand how and why;
- paradoxically, however, the instruments of violence are probably more widely available than at any time in the past – with more lethality in the hands of more people – and this raises a difficult question: are we delicately balanced on a potentially violent time bomb, or is the problem of political violence going to slowly solve itself over the long run, regardless of the availability of the instruments of violence?

- terrorism is a particular, but not at all new, form of political violence that represents only a small (although still significant) piece of the total puzzle of lethal violence today; and
- an account of new forms of violence that is useful to policy-makers and analysts must highlight the importance of the indirect victims of violence (which I will explain later) since they are far more numerous than the direct victims – those people actually killed by bullets, bombs or bayonets.

War, Violence and Insecurity

There are considerable uncertainties around historical figures for lethal violence, but let me just take four examples for the twentieth century to illustrate my point. According to the historian Eric Hobsbawm, about 187 million people “were killed or allowed to die” between 1914–1991. Milton Leitenberg, a former associate at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), systematically trawled through the sources, and claims that about 216 million people died in wars, conflict and “by human decision” in the twentieth century. Rudolph Rummel, a scholar at the University of Hawaii, comes up with a figure of about 169 million, and Matthew White (using similar sources) also with about 170 million violent deaths. However you look at it, this average of about 1.7–2.0 million people killed or allowed to die each year makes the twentieth century the bloodiest on historical record. This is probably also true in terms of populations as well.

But the place of interstate war in all this becomes clear when we ask how these people died. Of course, there were the two world wars (15 million dead in the First World War, 50 million in the Second World War), the Korean War (2.8 million), the Iran–Iraq War (1 million) and a few other major interstate wars. But these are balanced by major episodes of internal or civil violence: 20 million deaths in Stalin’s USSR, 2 million in the Sudanese civil war (1983–2000), 800,000 in Rwanda, more than 1 million in the Armenian genocide, 6 million in the Holocaust, tens of millions in Mao’s China, a million victims of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, and so forth.

Of course, some of these episodes of internal or civil violence are also linked to interstate wars in complex ways. But cause and effect is not clear, and at its most extreme, it is perhaps true that the majority of victims of lethal violence (certainly a very high proportion) have died at the hands of the state and its agents – what Rummel calls democide and others call politicide.

This alone ought to make us think hard about the implications of contemporary forms of violence for major actors and institutions, since the foremost institution designed or intended to control violence and impose a monopoly on its use is the modern state. When the state turns on its own citizens, it has failed in its fundamental duty to provide security and protection in return for loyalty, respect, and legitimacy. This makes the challenge of ‘state building’ – in the broadest sense (and not just in post-conflict situations) – central to efforts to reduce the scope and scale of lethal violence. It entails working to ensure that the political institutions serve the purposes for which, and protect

the people for whom, they were designed. It also underlines the importance of the sub-title of the 5th International Security Forum as a whole: *The Challenge of Securing State and Society*.

These examples do not, of course, exhaust the picture, since violence can come in less dramatic forms, both criminal and other, including homicide, suicide, minor massacres, local and gang-related violence, and so on. The best estimates, based on research conducted by the Small Arms Survey, are that there currently occur 200,000–270,000 deaths per year in non-conflict settings, although the figure may actually be somewhat higher. Even if this figure is an underestimate, this suggests that interstate or traditional war, at least in the last half of the twentieth century, was not necessarily the biggest risk of lethal armed violence that people faced, depending on where and when they lived.

So any concern with violence – new and old forms – must start by painting a more complete picture that includes war (both interstate and internal), other forms of violent conflict short of war, state violence against its citizens, and criminal and individual violence. From the perspective of the individual victim, all of these sources of insecurity are equally important, even if not equally likely.

Of course, this snapshot of the twentieth century has to be supplemented with a slightly longer-term picture – and the main question here is:

Is Lethal Violence Declining?

This question is important partly because some recent analyses (most prominently the *Human Security Report*) argue either explicitly or implicitly that we are at the dawn of a peaceful (or at least largely peaceful) era, buttressed in general terms by the democratic peace hypothesis and the slow, albeit steady, spread of democracy. As much as one would like to agree with this proposition, however, in light of events in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Sudan and elsewhere, it is not yet entirely convincing.

All analysts agree that recent decades have witnessed the near-total disappearance of major interstate war, as well as a fairly steady decline in the number of violent internal conflicts – SIPRI figures record around 20 wars ongoing in any given recent year. This has almost certainly also contributed to at least a short-term decline in lethal violence from *war* (which of course is only one of our concerns).

Most analysts would also agree that, set against the figures for the twentieth century, the numbers of victims of armed violence today seems rather low. Data from University of Uppsala (which is used by the *Human Security Report*, among others) estimates that there are around 30,000 mainly battle deaths in current wars; others have estimated that the number of direct deaths is around 80,000–100,000. When one adds to this figure the 200,000–270,000 annual deaths from lethal non-conflict violence (homicide, suicide, accident, etc.), this gives us a rough total of about 300,000 direct victims of violence per year. Compared to the figures above for the twentieth century – and even if it did witness

periods of relative peace – the last decade has clearly witnessed a lower number of people dying directly from armed violence than most other recent periods.

But what happens when you put this in a longer-term perspective? If the twentieth century was potentially the most violent in human history, then perhaps recent declines are simply a return to the norm. Some scholars, such as Meredith Sarkees and J.D. Singer, have argued that recent declines from the high levels of the twentieth century do not in fact represent a longer-term trend. When corrected for population growth, and compared to figures over two centuries, there has been no discernable decline in war deaths since 1816. As they put it: “the correction between deaths per thousand and the passage of time is insignificant”. Indeed, centuries other than the twentieth have been exceptionally bloody as well; one merely needs to recall the Thirty Years’ War of the seventeenth century, in which between one-quarter and one-third of the population of Central Europe died from war-related causes – making it, in a sense, the first ‘total war’.

This evidence, however sketchy, should give us pause when we attempt to project into the medium-term future the experience of a particular – and potentially unique – century of human history, and of the last 20 to 30 years. And perhaps more important than the correlations or short-term trends is an analysis of the *causes* of large-scale violence, and in particular, whether or not they have been reduced or eliminated or otherwise transformed.

Let us assume for a moment that lethal violence is declining, even though evidence is a little unclear. Broadly speaking, there are three potential explanations for such a decline in lethal violence that fit together to range from the systemic, to the state/domestic level, to the ‘individual’ or social level.

The first, most systemic, explanation is that the process of state-creation is nearly complete – with a few potential exceptions for separatist or self-determination movements such as in Aceh, Kosovo, Kurdistan, parts of Northern Somalia, Western Sahara, etc. I am not saying that all these situations warrant the creation of independent states, but rather that until their status is resolved, we have potential zones of violent conflict. And over the past few centuries, post-colonial and imperial conflicts, internal repression, population transfers, forced assimilation (and resistance to this) have been part and parcel of the spread and universalisation of the Westphalian state system. We can be thankful that this process is reaching some sort of conclusion, since state creation has been a bloody and violent process.

But that leaves the second issue, which is: what kinds of states have we created? Again, perhaps the greatest number of victims of lethal violence have been killed by their own state or its agents. Although the democratic peace hypothesis and its variants have focused on the declining risk of major interstate war, in theory at least it should also account for the pacification of life within states, on the assumption that democracies are less likely to threaten the security and safety of their citizens. This is fairly self-evident and almost tautologically true. However one may regard the governments of China, Russia and other semi-authoritarian states – human tragedy on the scale of Stalin or Mao seems

to be excluded, except for minor despots or near-forgotten tragedies (I exclude here genocidal acts in Africa, which do seem rather significant).

The final piece of the puzzle is that of violence within societies, and here there also appears to be strong and consistent evidence of a long-term decline in inter-personal violence in Western and Northern societies. This has been called by Norbert Elias the ‘civilising process’. You may think that you live in violent times or places, but historical speaking, residents of the global North are extraordinarily secure. The most severe form of inter-personal violence – homicide – has systematically and dramatically declined in Western Europe from the high levels of the Middle Ages. Homicide rates dropped roughly by half from the medieval to the early modern period (late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries), and by the nineteenth century, had dropped five to ten times further.

This holds across all of Western Europe, from England and Scandinavia to Germany, Switzerland, the Low Countries and Italy. The homicide rate in England dropped from about 23 per 100,000 in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to 4.3 per 100,000 by the end of the seventeenth, to 0.8 per 100,000 by the first half of the twentieth century. In the Netherlands and Belgium, equivalent figures were 47.0, 9.2 and 1.7 per 100,000; in Germany/Switzerland, the figures fell from 43 per 100,000 to below 2.0 for the twentieth century. Although the exact timing and scope of the decline varies from place to place, there is no doubt about the decline in lethal violence within European states.

This general decline of lethal violence is a reflection of shifting ideas about the legitimate use of violence and the importance of personal security – at least in public space. It highlights the increasing ability of the state to enforce its claim to monopolise violence by subordinating all individuals to state authority, and emphasises such processes as urbanisation or the spread of mass education and social services, which permitted greater regulation of violence and insecurity, indeed of all aspects of the life of citizens.

Paradoxically, However, the Instruments of Violence are More Widely Available than at Any Time in the Past

As research by the Small Arms Survey has pointed out, there are at least 640 million small arms and light weapons in the world today, excluding illegal civilian weapons. Two hundred and forty-one million (38 percent) are in the hands of national armed forces, 378 million (59 percent) are in legal civilian possession, 18 million (3 percent) are in the hands of police forces, and 1 million (less than 1 percent) are in the hands of insurgent groups. If one excludes the special case of weapons of mass destruction, at least in terms of ‘ordinary lethal force’ the state’s monopoly of violence is a legal, not a practical, one in most parts of the world. And today, more lethal firepower is available to more people than at any time. It is also worth noting that this is *not* a function of the rise of criminal bands and armed groups – in fact, a very small proportion of the world’s weapons are in the hands of non-state armed groups, although it is precisely these weapons that are responsible for much of the death and destruction associated with contemporary violent conflicts.

These facts have some direct practical and policy implications:

- we need to minimise the risk of groups with grievances gaining access to large quantities of weapons, through the development of international policies to restrict the transfer of weapons to non-state armed groups;
- we need to mop up the surplus of weapons that exist when states change their military or strategic policies, or simply replace older weapons or demobilise and disarm after a war – these guns should be collected and destroyed, not sent elsewhere where their use (and misuse) is more likely; and
- we need to ensure the appropriate regulation of civilian possession of weapons, so that the wrong people in the wrong places do not acquire the means of wreaking violence on individuals and society.

Certainly there is no simple correlation between weapons availability and misuse, but the spread of large quantities of military-style automatic weapons to the four corners of the world has overturned the delicate balance between force and negotiation in many places (especially in traditional communities), and increased the destructiveness of conflicts when they do break out. Weapons are the ‘dry tinder’ that can make the resort to armed violence less costly for conflicting parties, and can make the peaceful resolution of disputes – from the local to the global – more difficult.

Where does Terrorism Fit into This Picture?

Terrorism, as most analysts would agree, is a marginal phenomenon from this perspective. It is difficult to put precise figures on the numbers of victims of terrorist acts, since definitions matter a great deal here. But at the most, the annual number of victims of terrorism – according to fairly comprehensive US estimates – is around 14,000 people killed. In 2005, there were 11,100 terrorist incidents, with 14,500 non-combatants killed (only 86 of whom were Americans according to the US Department of State); 6,000 of whom were police or government officials. In addition, perhaps 25,000 people were wounded and upwards of 35,000 kidnapped.

Although we do not have good enough data to make meaningful comparisons over time, one observation we can make is that terrorism represents – depending on how you count it – somewhere between 20–50 percent of ‘conflict deaths’, and only about five percent of the total number of victims of armed violence in any given year. Yet in the current geostrategic context, the threat from terrorism receives vastly disproportionate resources, and it is no wonder, from the perspective ‘on the ground’, why many individuals think this attention is skewed, since it does little or nothing to treat the everyday threats and insecurities that most people face.

The Indirect Victims of Violence Vastly Outnumber Those Killed by Bullets, Bombs or Bayonets

My last point attempts to broaden the debate beyond the simple number of people killed or wounded in violent exchanges. Any useful account of the impact of new (or old) forms

of violence must include both direct and indirect victims. Today, most estimates and datasets are careful to count only what they call battle deaths, or war deaths – meaning people killed in the fighting, and by violent means. But this is hardly the whole picture. In Darfur, for example, armed gunmen might enter a village and kill five or six (or 20 or 30) people, but they will cause several hundred to flee. Within a few weeks, a shocking percentage of the vulnerable (in particular the aged and infants) die of easily preventable causes such as dysentery, hunger, or diarrhoea – causes that they would not have died of had they been able to stay peacefully in their village.

The technical term for this is ‘excess mortality’, and in some situations it reaches very high levels. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), for example, of the more than three million people reported to have died during that conflict (excess over ‘normal’ mortality), only around 10 percent of them died from violent means. A similar phenomenon is being witnessed in the Sudan. In Sub-Saharan Africa in general, according to the available evidence, the ratio (although with tremendous variations) of direct to indirect deaths hovers around a median of 1:4. And it matters not at all to the young mother whose infant dies three months after they fled their village whether the child was shot or starved – whether the child was a direct casualty of the war or not. Such calculus is purely academic.

When we bring indirect conflict deaths into the picture, the full human cost of wars in the DRC, or Southern Sudan, or Darfur, or Afghanistan or Iraq becomes more obvious, and then some of the optimism of the ‘declining levels of violence’ proponents appears to be misplaced. Certainly, we need to entertain seriously the possibility that we believe that there is a decline in conflict deaths only because we are being more careful and conservative about what we count as war deaths in recent years. If one uses a more precise counting method, with conservative counting rules that include only verifiable battle deaths, then of course one will arrive at lower figures than in the past. Conversely, if earlier, pre-1990s figures, covering such things as the wars in Angola, Central America, Korea, Mozambique, Southeast Asia and elsewhere were not precise counts, but rough estimates, based on impressionistic and journalistic accounts, that crucially included or mixed direct (battle) deaths and ‘indirect deaths’, then perhaps things have not necessarily changed for the better.

One could go even further, and argue that the indirect *costs* of violence – beyond death and injury (both direct and indirect) – should also be part of our calculus of the impact of new forms of violence. The indirect costs of violence are numerous. They come in the form of insecurity for humanitarian agencies, an increased burden on the public health system, increased costs of security provision for the state (or individuals), lost investment opportunities (human and social as well as physical capital), and loss of access to basic (immunisation programs are curtailed, infant mortality rates rise, schools are closed as teachers refuse to work in insecure areas, and literacy rates decline). Overall, this leads to reduced economic activity and socio-economic development in the form of diminished investment, the destruction of infrastructure, and so forth. The Inter-American Development Bank, for instance, estimated that the direct and indirect costs of violence in Latin America amount to US\$ 140–170 billion per year.

When thinking about the costs of security – or of investing in DDR, SSR, and post-conflict reconstruction – we need to be aware that the real costs of armed violence are much higher than just the number of battle deaths, or the number of direct and indirect victims. We need, however unpleasant the task, to start to put some numbers on these costs, in order to weigh these costs against the very real costs of taking concrete action. We also need to know if our policies are contributing to measurable reductions in armed violence and tangible improvements in human security.

Concluding Thoughts

Three observations can summarise my argument. First, in order to think clearly about ‘new forms of violence’, we have to adopt a broad perspective that goes well beyond war, terrorism, and civil conflict to look at all sources and causes of lethal armed violence. Many of these causes, such as governance failure, or state collapse, or the process of state- and society-building, play themselves out on the local, national and international stage, and are inter-linked.

Second, over the long-term there has been a shifting, and not always stable, equilibrium between the means of inflicting violence and threatening force and the institutions we have created to control and regulate the use of force. Certainly in the early modern period – the seventeenth century – the balance was in favour of the use of force rather than its control. Yet as state power slowly expanded, a sort of domestic and international peace was imposed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Arguably, this was upset with the technological and social developments of the Industrial Revolution and the twentieth century – when the ability to use organised violence triumphed over the ability of institutions to control it.

I am not certain that today we have successfully rebalanced the scales in favour of control and regulation of force, and I think there are contradictory trends at work, including the diffusion of weapons and the means of violence, the weakening of state institutions, the privatisation of security provision, and the rise of networks of violence that flow across state and regional borders.

The lessons for conflict reduction and prevention are many – too many to summarise here – but in simple terms strategies for reducing armed violence – whether from war, civil conflict, terrorism, or whatever source – have to focus on building effective, accountable and representative institutions that simultaneously help to make the state’s legal monopoly on organised violence a reality, and to ensure that this monopoly is not abused.

The Shifting Face of Violence²

Theodor H. Winkler

In October 2005 the Human Security Centre of the University of British Columbia published the first *Human Security Report*.³ 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 at the end of the twentieth century. The UN and the international community would be doing their job – and doing it well.⁴ The figures presented by the report (based on data compiled by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program) soon led however to a debate⁵. 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.⁶
- The data would only measure the direct costs of conflict, mainly battle death in armed conflicts – thus ignoring significant numbers, if not the bulk, of conflicts and victims: internal strife, respectively people killed by marauding bands or dying of hunger or thirst because they were preventing them from tending their fields or even fetching water.⁷
- 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’.⁸

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’.⁹

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?

² A shorter version of this article was published in summer 2007 in *Military Power Revue* of the Swiss Armed Forces.

³ University of British Columbia, Human Security Centre, *Human Security Report 2005: War and Peace in the 21st Century*, Oxford University Press, New York, N.Y..

⁴ The UN has indeed never before had as many uniformed personnel in peacebuilding missions as today.

⁵ See in particular Michael Brzoska, “Definitions of Armed Conflicts and Wars. Are They Still Reliable?”, *SIPRI Yearbook 2007*, forthcoming.

⁶ A good example of this type of discussion are the debates on how many casualties the US operations against Iraq have cost. See for example Joachim Laukenmann, “Statistik des Todes; Umfragen liefern in Kriegszeiten genauere Daten über Opfer in der Zivilbevölkerung”, *SonntagsZeitung*, 3 December 2006, pp. 88-9.

⁷ Brzoska cites the example of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). In 2006 battle deaths had dropped below the figure of 150 per year, the threshold used by Uppsala for recognizing violence as a conflict. Yet UNICEF reported at the same time that widespread violence was causing in early 2006 some 1,200 victims a day in the DRC.

⁸ See Herfried Münkler, *Die neuen Kriege*, Rowohlt, Reinbeck bei Hamburg, 2002.

⁹ University of British Columbia, Human Security Centre, *Human Security Brief 2006*, p. 1.

- 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 armed forces and 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 throughout most of history – both in relative and in absolute terms – a much more prevalent part of mankind’s daily life than today – from the Roman Empire¹⁰ to the Thirty Years War¹¹ – let alone the twentieth century.¹²

Today, the creation of the United Nations has provided us with an instrument of collective security that can, if permitted, work. In Europe, the creation of the European Union has relegated to the past the national rivalries and murderous wars that had torn the continent for millennia. 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. Such a threat has clearly become less probable today (though it has not disappeared).

Conflict in its traditional form continues, however, to exist – as for example the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as numerous smaller conflicts illustrate.¹³ There lurk, moreover, 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 South Korea; or the Taiwan question, for which the People’s Republic of China has never ruled out the use of force once and for all. Other traditional conflict situations, though of a comparatively lower impact level,¹⁴ only confirm this overall picture.

It cannot be excluded that the risk of more traditional conflicts might in the years to come grow again. Should, for instance, the United States, 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 (or unwilling) to react to emerging new global challenges,¹⁵ the temptation would be there for many to use the hour and create military *faits accomplis*.

¹⁰ Caesar’s conquest of Gaul cost 1-2 million Celts their lives, while countless others were enslaved. The Jewish war of 68-70 AD cost another estimated 1 million dead.

¹¹ Which led to the death of up to one-third of the population of the Holy Roman Empire.

¹² Whose conflicts cost an estimated 190 million human lives.

¹³ The latest being the Ethiopian intervention in Somalia.

¹⁴ If Ethiopia invades Somalia, international ripple effects are nil. If China should invade Taiwan, which is producing a significant amount of the world’s semi-conductors, the world economy would receive a most severe blow.

¹⁵ According to high-ranking officials, the US Army is no longer able to guarantee that an airborne brigade - the so-called ‘ready brigade’ - can be deployed anywhere in the world with advance elements within 18 hours and in full strength within 72 hours. The reasons are gaps in training, equipment, and available air transport. Of the just over 20 Army brigades deployed in early 2007 in the continental United States and in bases in Europe and Asia only one (stationed in

There is a very recent 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 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 United States truly founder (or be perceived to founder) in the quagmires of Iraq and Afghanistan,¹⁶ 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.

Similarly, a United States perceived as unable or unwilling to respond would clearly encourage would-be regional powers to assert their claims. Iran and Venezuela are cases in point. Such ambitions may, in turn, trigger negative reactions and power realignments in the region concerned – as do Iran’s aspirations in the Arab world¹⁷ and the Middle East in general.

There is the risk of a revival of proxy wars.¹⁸

The slow crumbling of the international non-proliferation regime,¹⁹ raises, moreover, both the risk of local nuclear war and of an increased threat of nuclear weapons or 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 impact on the planet’s climate.²⁰ 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.²¹

And there are other disturbing trends. The question is legitimate whether we are not witnessing the end of arms control, one of the most important mitigating factors of the Cold War. Initially, it was the US Administration under President George W. Bush that pulled out

South Korea) has enough equipment and manpower to be sent quickly into combat. *International Herald Tribune*, 20 March, p. 4. Similarly, strains on reserve and National Guard units increased as a result of the prolonged combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Divorce rates in the armed forces have increased.

¹⁶ Even President George W. Bush, in a speech on 19 March 2007, described success in Iraq not as a certainty, but a “hoped for possibility”. Should the United States simply pack up and go home that would mean, he argued, that a “contagion of violence” could spill out across the entire nation and beyond. *International Herald Tribune*, 20 March, p. 4. By June 2007, in spite of significant US reinforcements, the average number of civilian dead was still some 100 weekly, that of attacks on Iraqi and coalition security forces some 1,060 per week. *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 15 June, 2007, p. 3. May 2007 saw with 127 US soldiers killed one of the highest casualty rates since the beginning of the war. *Stern*, no. 25, 14 June 2007, p. 18.

¹⁷ For many Sunni and conservative Arab regimes, Gaza under Hamas is a nightmare. It is perceived as an ‘Iran on the Mediterranean’.

¹⁸ To some extent such proxy wars have already returned in the Middle East. Syria is, thus, seen to be still heavily, though indirectly, involved in Lebanon. Iran is seen by many as having encouraged the attacks of Hezbollah on Israel and the creation of ‘Hamastan’ in the Gaza strip in June 2007.

¹⁹ From India and Pakistan through North Korea and, potentially, Iran.

²⁰ A ‘limited’ nuclear exchange involving some 100 relatively low-yield 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°C to 4.0°C. World food production would be severely affected. See Joachim Laukenmann, “Der atomare Herbst”, *SonntagsZeitung*, 11 March 2007, p. 81.

²¹ For the risks involved in clandestine proliferation see The International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Nuclear Black Markets; Pakistan, A.Q. Khan and the Rise of Proliferation Networks: A Net Assessment*, London, 2007.

of arms control commitments, starting with the ABM Treaty. Today, it is Russia (feeling conventionally inferior to the United States and therefore increasingly banking on nuclear weapons) that threatens to terminate existing agreements – from the CFE Treaty to, potentially, the INF agreement. The future of START, coming up for renewal in 2009, is at least open. Arms control has as much a regulating function in a relationship than it has substance in military terms. Its demise would be dangerous. Worse, arms control does as a tool for regulating difficult relationships not even exist between the emerging new actors on the international scene – from China and India to Iran and Israel.

No less disturbing is the trend towards the proliferation of other weaponry that can cause catastrophic damage. Thus, China tested in early 2007 its first anti-satellite weapon. The test was widely read to demonstrate China's ability to create significant amounts of debris in space,²² thus posing a deadly threat to many satellites – but also facilities such as the International Space Station.²³ While some anti-satellite weapons are technologically so sophisticated to remain the preserve of a few countries only, cruder explosive devices maximised for debris production in lower orbits can essentially be developed by most countries that have ballistic missiles of a certain range.

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. A United States perceived to be weakened might invite the renewed outbreak of hostilities in what are today dormant or frozen conflicts. A return to regional claims, proxy wars and new forms of warfare remains a possibility.

Non-Traditional Warfare

Most conflicts are in the early twenty-first century, however, no longer of a traditional nature. They are not fought between governments, but between a government (or coalition of governments) and sub-state actors 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 are even been conducted between the latter groups themselves – with no, or only 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 and Somalia to West Africa and Darfur – to violence at a level unheard of for a long time. We are indeed confronted by a multiplication of actor issues, and means²⁴ – 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.²⁵

²² See Phillip C. Saunders, Charles D. Lutes, "China's ASAT Test: Motivations and Implications", Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, Washington D.C., June 2007, p. 6.

²³ The ISS must already today continuously navigate to avoid some known debris in its path.

²⁴ Curt Gasteyger, "The Multiplication of Actors, Issues and Means", in *International Relations in a Changing World*, Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva, 1978.

²⁵ The typology of sub-state actors has, in recent years, become much more complex. If in the past guerrilla groups and national liberation movements largely dominated the picture, today we find all sorts of actors: jihadist movements, organised criminal factions, pirates, and warlords that traffick in human beings as easily as in small arms, drugs, blood diamonds, tropical woods, and any other commodity that sells. In some places, from Columbia to Somalia, war has become an end in itself. We are indeed back to Tilly and Wallenstein and the Thirty Years War.

Such non-traditional conflicts prove, first of all, difficult to extinguish. The most striking example is clearly the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Other examples include Kashmir, the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region, parts of South East Asia or Columbia. More generally speaking, historical data show that roughly half of the conflicts stopped as a result of national reconciliation efforts or the UN or other international crisis management efforts erupt again within the next five years.²⁶ 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 have, as a rule, a restricted political base, are often involved in a sharp competition with each other,²⁷ and are 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, in turn, the creation of rival militias by those segments of the population that feel threatened²⁸. They can, and most often do, provide 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'. On an even larger scale, Afghan Mujahedeen have subsequently fought in as different conflicts as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chechnya, or Iraq. If a peace settlement cannot be extended into a regional settlement, the risk that non-traditional conflicts will both proliferate and 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, that of automatic rifles at 55–72 million.²⁹ Add to those numbers countless grenades and rocket launchers of all descriptions, mortars and other light weapons, as well as shoulder-launched surface-to-air missiles. The weaponry to make conflicts flare up again any time is clearly around in most post-conflict situations. The abundance of weapons in most conflict zones makes non-traditional conflicts also cheap to run, particularly if child soldiers are used and since the soldiery is often living off the land.³⁰

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.

²⁶ Sad examples are Haiti, East Timor and Sri Lanka. See the United Nations General Assembly, *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*, Report of the Secretary General, Addendum: Peacebuilding Commission, UN document A/59/2005/Add.2, 23 May 2005, p. 1.

²⁷ 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).

²⁸ For example the Shia and Sunni militias that have sprung up in Iraq.

²⁹ Graduate Institute of International Studies, *Small Arms Survey 2001*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 62.

³⁰ See Münkler, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-42.

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

What was said about non-traditional warfare is all the more true, if we look at terrorism – as the US perplexities in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and in its so-called ‘War on Terror’³¹ bear witness. Several factors contribute to this outcome. The United States is confronted in its War on Terror not only with asymmetric warfare, but with a set of adversaries that pursue asymmetric objectives. Al Kaidah does not want to *win* the war; it wants the United States to *lose* it. That is not the same thing at all.

The ultimate target group of fundamentalist terrorist organisations is not the United States or Europe. While 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 Western cosmopolitan societies might be able to lure Muslims into a multicultural society.

Terrorist organisations seek large casualty rates not as an objective in itself. They kill, so to speak, only incidentally. They lash out not so much at the bodies of their helpless victims than at the minds of those who survive. The very word ‘terror’ makes it clear that the target group is not the dead, but the living.

They aim to provoke, both in the West and in the Muslim world, a response leading to growing inter-communal distrust that, in turn, will sharply reduce the chance for multicultural cooperation and integration while eventually fostering inter-communal hatred and self-isolation. Osama bin Laden may abhor Madonna, but he adores Huntington. We are confronted with people who do not play rugby, but three-band billiards. It is not boxing, but judo. For that very reason, terrorist organisations are difficult to defeat. The stronger the countermeasures, the more the security forces risk playing into the hands of the perpetrators. Guantanamo deprives, thus, the United States in the eyes of many of much of the moral high ground needed to win the war on terror. It might cost the United States its soul.

The main impact of a terrorist attack lies in the repercussions and reactions it creates. Thus, in material terms, the economic damage done to the United States by the destruction of the World Trade Center was dwarfed by the costs of the economic impact that attack had – from the airline industry to the global economy and, ultimately, the US decision to invade Iraq. The increasingly interdependent technological base of our society offers an abundance of critical infrastructure as target 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 into small cells and encourage the creation of new, totally autonomous, like-minded cells. They are like cancer. To counter such a threat is more

³¹ 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.

difficult. Any countermeasure will no longer be directed against a clearly defined adversary, but rather against a much more diffuse enemy. The problem is no longer defined as a specific enemy, but as a suspicious group of the population. This, in turn, is a powerful motor to disrupt multicultural approaches. Reported trends in the United Kingdom and other countries are in this respect most worrisome.³²

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 weapons³³ appear today as the most likely candidates. The use of a radiological device in a subway would indeed be a totally different matter from a conventional bomb attack. The psychological impact of such an attack would be massive. And: access to radiological materials is comparatively easy, for the stocks are badly guarded.

Disturbing is, furthermore, the fact that should a terrorist group be able to acquire highly enriched uranium³⁴ in one way or another it might not be able to build a nuclear bomb as such, but could conceivably be capable of constructing a very crude, cumbersome and bulky nuclear device.³⁵ A larger garage in the target city would suffice to accommodate such a project.³⁶ Plutonium bombs are, except as radiological devices, beyond the capabilities of sub-state actors. There remains, finally, also the option of a nuclear-weapon state providing terrorists with a nuclear device – though it should not be overrated. The consequences for a country giving away nuclear weapons that are then used by terrorists would in all probability be devastating.³⁷

There are other forms of non-traditional warfare on the horizon, exploiting the manifold vulnerabilities of modern societies. Thus, Estonia became in 2007 victim of the first full-fledged cyber-attack after the government decided to move a Soviet war memorial from the centre of Tallin to the city's periphery. The countries entire information technology base was for several weeks the target of a well-coordinated attack by hackers that aimed to overwhelm the system – from all state sites to the emergency call numbers. The attacks culminated on 9 May, the memorial day of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany. Such attacks need not to be initiated by a government. Sophisticated private hackers have that capability, too.³⁸ The event highlights the need for totally new national defence, and international response, capabilities.

In an increasingly globalised world, in which any disturbance can lead to a chain reaction around the globe, the list of critical infrastructure, integrated processes, and interlinked dependencies is quickly growing – and so is the risk that this will be exploited by an attacker.

³² Most experts agree that the number of potential suicide bombers among the resident Muslim population in the United Kingdom is substantial and might be as high as 2,000. Similar, though obviously difficult to verify, estimates exist for France.

³³ The decoding of DNA has potentially opened the door to a whole new generation of 'designer biological weapons' that can cause disastrous effects. It is only a question of time until terrorists will make use of these possibilities.

³⁴ Of which there exist around the world dangerously large stockpiles.

³⁵ For a more detailed analysis see Francesco Calogero, *The Threat of Nuclear Terrorism*, contribution to the International Conference on "The Prevention of a Nuclear Catastrophe", Luxemburg, 24-25 May 2007, p. 14.

³⁶ For the effects of even small nuclear weapons in terrorist hands and a more detailed discussion of the subject see Roland Wengenmayr, "Nuklearer Albtraum", in *NZZ am Sonntag*, 4 March 2007, p. 69.

³⁷ Enriched uranium and plutonium have their "fingerprints" that permit tracing the source.

³⁸ See Hannes Gamillscheg, "Bombensprengkraft in Megabits", *Der Bund*, 16 June 2007, p. 6.

Conclusion 2: Non-traditional forms of warfare will become ever more relevant. There are at least four different trends to be observed in this context. First, conflicts pay. Fought with asymmetrical, and often brutal, means that show a total disregard of human beings,³⁹ small-scale conflicts are likely to stay with us, if not to grow 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 psychological and political warfare. Thirdly, the use of crude weapons of mass destruction against civilian targets is a very likely contingency. Finally, the growing vulnerability of a globalised world invites new forms of attacks. 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.⁴⁰ Yet what we witness on the ground is a return to a new sort of the ‘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 could 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 with respect to Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine. 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 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

³⁹ In the civil war in Sierra Leone civilians, particularly children, were brutally mutilated in order to impose a humanitarian burden on the adversary.

⁴⁰ As a result of globalisation, the world’s GNP is estimated to grow until 2020 by some 60% to US\$ 44.4 trillion. See Nicole Gnesotto, “La sécurité dans un monde post-occidental”, *Esprit*, May 2007, p. 69.

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.

A no less disturbing phenomenon is the fact that in a globalised world,⁴¹ national security interest and national economic interests need no longer to overlap. Are low oil prices truly in the interest of oil companies? What is the ultimate meaning of a national economy in a globalised world? What has started in shipping with ‘flags of convenience’ is in today’s world a structural problem of the first order.

It is, however, 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: global warming.⁴² The question is no longer whether this will happen. The question is also no longer whether humankind is responsible for it happening. 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 of our blue planet will until the end of this century become warmer – in the worst case by 4.0°C, in the best case by 1.8°C.⁴³ 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 other countries. Whether these measures will be enough (particularly given the obvious reluctance of China, the United States, and some oil-producing countries against measures with too many teeth), and whether the mood of the moment can be sustained, remains 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 before it will truly improve.

Global warming will cause problems enough for highly developed nations like Switzerland. The melting of the glaciers, the increase in landslides and floods, or the abnormally warm winter of 2006–2007 and the exceptionally wet summer of 2007 are signs on the wall. Switzerland should, however, in the end essentially be able to cope.⁴⁴ Consequences will, though, be disastrous for other parts of the world. Regions that suffer already today from hunger and scarcity of water – or that for other reasons are just barely able to hang on – will be most hard hit. Desertification, droughts, bush and forest fires, flooding, ever more devastating storms, rising sea levels, even the accelerated spreading of insect transmitted diseases, are key words in this context.

Climate change 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 migrate. The answer is obvious. Global warming will further accentuate the trend towards large-scale

⁴¹ For the best recent analysis of the issues presented by a globalising world, see Nayef R.F. Al-Rodhan, *Symbiotic Realism: A Theory of International Relations in an Instant and Interdependent World*, LIT-Verlag, Berlin and Zürich, 2007, p. 157.

⁴² See the reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of February and April 2007 published by the WMO and UNEP.

⁴³ IPCC, *Climate Change 2007: The Physical Base; Summary for Policymakers*, WMO/UNEP, February 2007, p. 11.

⁴⁴ See Beratendes Organ für Fragen der Klimaerwärmung (UVEK/EDI), *Klimaänderung und die Schweiz 2050*, Bern, March 2007.

migration. Some of the regions likely to be most affected, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, are already today particularly conflict prone. Other regions – such as low lying Bangladesh⁴⁵ – 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 rising sea levels – if not simply disappear under the waters.⁴⁶ Access to fresh water⁴⁷ and arable land will become scarce.

Climate change confronts also the armed forces and the security sector in general with challenges of a new sort and magnitude. The pictures from, and the sad story of, New Orleans in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina need no comment.

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 are likely to further increase the potential for violence both inside fragile societies and at the sub-regional and regional levels.⁴⁸

Demography, Migration, Urbanisation, Street Violence, and Organised Crime

The world is facing within the next decades 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.⁴⁹ 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.⁵⁰ According to Huntington, societies with a share of more than 20% of 15–20-year-olds 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-born males. Studies by German demographer Steffen Kröhnert seem to confirm that statement.⁵¹

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 means 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

⁴⁵ To illustrate the point: should the sea level eventually rise by up to six metres, as some experts fear, 120-150 million inhabitants of the Ganges Delta might have to flee from the waters (Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth*).

⁴⁶ Including Tokyo, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Mumbai, Calcutta, Dhaka, London, and New York. *Stern*, no. 12/2007, p. 72.

⁴⁷ 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.

⁴⁸ According to the same IPCC Report, flooding alone could by 2080 displace every year up to 100 million human beings.

⁴⁹ See “China in der demographischen Zwickmühle; Überalterung und Mädchenmangel”, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 2 February 2007, p. 9.

⁵⁰ UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 2007*.

⁵¹ See for more details Balz Spörri, “Die Wurzeln der Gewalt”, *SonntagsZeitung*, 11 June 2006, p. 80.

criminal gangs an estimated €300 million per year.⁵² The nature of the criminal organisations involved has also changed. Once small-time smuggling organisations work today increasingly with transnational and cross-national networks.⁵³

Migration is also a function of conflict. Currently, conflict has – as the Human Security 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 though be broken, migratory pressure would increase again.

Illegal migration poses multiple problems. First, the uprooting of people in the countries of origin puts additional strain on already 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, even when the migrants succeed and reach the *banlieues* of Paris and Marseille, they face, more often than not, a life with no future. Deprived of meaningful job opportunities, these youth have as perspective only social security, youth gangs, drugs, violence, and Allah. They risk to become easy pray for radical preachers – thereby deepening inter-cultural tensions and their own isolation. A vicious spiral indeed.

A related problem is posed by the rapid urbanisation in many parts of the world. In 1800, only 2% of the world's population lived in cities. The figure rose to 30% by 1950, 49% in 2003, and is expected to grow to 60% by 2030.⁵⁴ 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.⁵⁵ 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.⁵⁶ Today roughly one in six people on our planet live in an urban slum. And their numbers will explode. It will globally double from some 721.6 million in 1990 to 1,477.3 billion in 2020.⁵⁷

⁵² Caroline Brothers, "Criminal organizations wring big profit from illegal migrants", *International Herald Tribune*, 20 March 2007, pp. 1 and 8.

⁵³ *ibid.*

⁵⁴ United 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*.

⁵⁵ UNHSP 2003. The phenomenon of an increase in the world's slum population is echoed, at the macro-economic level, by the gap between the world's rich and poor nations. Today, the 25 richest countries trigger 80% of world trade, while 56 countries produce less than 0.01% of world trade each. While globalisation will significantly increase the world's GNP, it while not necessarily even out these discrepancies. See Nicole Gnesotto, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

⁵⁶ "Slum Estimates Data", *Compendium of Human Settlement Statistics; Statistical Annex to the Global Report and the State of the World's Cities Report 2001*.

⁵⁷ UNHSP 2001.

Slum dwellers are confronted in cities like Rio and its like with stark contrasts in wealth, little prospects except very low-paid jobs, and a depressing choice between occasional jobs, begging, drugs, prostitution and crime. Urban violence is, as a result, surging in many parts of the world.

The situation is particularly dramatic in Brazil. Gangs, mostly composed of youth, control entire segments of Rio de Janeiro. The police are not able (and do 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 better armed than the police. Some possess even armour. Thus, it is estimated that in Rio alone, 12,000 children and teenagers are involved in the narcotics trade – of which some 5,500 are armed.⁵⁸ Between 1978 and 2000, more people, particularly children, died from 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 from the United Nations. The figure for the period 1979 to 2003 is a staggering estimated 500,000.⁵⁹ 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.

A trend towards youth violence for the sake of violence can be observed in many cities in the world. Even in peaceful Switzerland, it is on the rise. The number of victims of street violence treated in the cantonal hospital has thus doubled in Bern over the last six years (when a corresponding statistic was first introduced). The nature of the wounds inflicted has, moreover, significantly increased. The reason is, unlike Brazil, not economic circumstances, but rather a growing willingness among some young males to seek, particularly over weekends, rows and fights as a way to release tension.⁶⁰ At the same time, gang rape cases involving victims in their early to mid-teens appear to be increasing, too. Violent video games as well as hard-core pornography and video clips depicting scenes of extreme violence that many youths exchange through their mobile phones appear to bear much responsibility for the phenomenon.

There is also the danger of imitating deeds of others. In the Anglo-Saxon world, school massacres have thus become an endemic problem. A related and increasingly dangerous problem is hooliganism, often in the context of major sports events, particularly (though not exclusively) soccer. Today a major soccer championship (European Championship or World Championship) requires security forces of an unprecedented scale – up to and including entire squadrons of combat fighters. Most countries' police forces are no longer sufficient for such a job and need subsidiary support from the armed forces and neighbouring countries.

A growing potential for trouble is, to cite another example, the explosion of international air trafficking. The United Kingdom reported in 1978 a grand total of 45.4 million passengers departing from British Airports. By 1999 that figure had more than tripled to some

⁵⁸ <[http://humansecurity.gc.ca/pdf/freedom from fear urban-en.pdf](http://humansecurity.gc.ca/pdf/freedom%20from%20fear%20urban-en.pdf)>.

⁵⁹ <<http://www.alternet.org/story/27279/>>.

⁶⁰ Random violence becomes “happy slapping”.

150.9 million passengers.⁶¹ Globally, the early twenty-first century saw a further annual increase in air passengers of some 7% per year.⁶² In 2006, some 1.5 billion passengers were transported around the globe.⁶³ Such increased global mobility is bound to create fundamentally new challenges for the security sector and hence international security and stability.

On a related front, organised international crime is evolving into a threat of strategic proportions. Never before have so many drugs been produced⁶⁴ and trafficked. The resulting enormous criminal gains render organised crime able to outclass many police organisations 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 US\$ 1 trillion⁶⁵ and 1.5 trillion per year.⁶⁶

Conclusion 4: Conflict and climate change further increase migratory pressure on fragile societies. The migratory flows risk to destabilise 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.

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.⁶⁷ The euphemism hides the fact that they have been killed for gender-related reasons. Just to sustain such a ‘deficit’, some 2–3 million girls and 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 in many parts of the world, notably in China

⁶¹ “Statistical information on air passenger numbers and characteristics”, collected for the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee inquiry into the Air Cabin Environment by the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST), London, 2002, p. 4.

⁶² “The Airline Industry”, <<http://adg.stanford.edu/aa241/intro/airlineindustry.html>>, p. 1.

⁶³ *ibid.*

⁶⁴ In 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).

⁶⁵ Financial Crimes Task Force, Global Organized Crime Project, The Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C.

⁶⁶ IMF.

⁶⁷ Marie Vlachova and Lea BIASON, *Women in an Insecure World; Violence against Women; Facts, Figures and Analysis*, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Geneva, 2005.

and India). 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.⁶⁸ 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.⁶⁹ Some of the women were detained in what can only be described as rape camps. Many of them were raped systematically until they became pregnant from their tormentors. The objective was not only to humiliate the enemy men through their inability to protect their womenfolk, but to prepare the ground for 'ethnic cleansing'.⁷⁰ It paid off.

The seed of the Balkan 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. In Liberia, an estimated 40–60% of all women and girls were raped during the civil war. It is to be feared that the same horrors will accompany also the next conflict in Africa (and elsewhere). War-related sexual violence is like an infectious disease. It spreads. For the use of rape as a weapon of war 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 remain 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 a particularly vulnerable segment of society. They suffer in many ways – through families torn apart, through the 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 cannon fodder, as sherpas, or as sex slaves.⁷¹ The list of horrors is

⁶⁸ For having refused a suitor.

⁶⁹ All 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.

⁷⁰ See Münkler, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-55.

⁷¹ For more details see "Child Soldiers", DCAF Backgrounder, Geneva, October 2006.

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 war crime, few of the perpetrators are held responsible – hardly anyone is ever put to trial. To combat the practise proves extremely difficult.⁷²

There are other forms of violence against children – ranging from their reduction to organ donors to their mutilation in order to place in a conflict an unacceptable humanitarian burden on the opposing side. Nothing is so shocking than to read the tales of what perversions mankind has reserved for children – who are, after all, our future.

Children that experience or witness these acts of barbarism will, in due time, become extremely difficult members of society. It is, thus, not surprising that among the youth gangs and young adults bedeviling with their violence essentially peaceful societies such as Switzerland, a disproportionate part are those that witnessed, and sometimes barely escaped, the horrors of the wars of disintegrating Yugoslavia.

And there is little hope for the future. The guns may be silent now in Sarajevo, but other – even more forceful – trends augur badly for women and children. 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 also a more sinister prospect for some of the most vulnerable members of society. The collapse of the Iron Curtain has rendered the trafficking of human beings possible at a scale heretofore unknown. So has the increase in international air traffic. And so has the growth of international organised crime. It is estimated that each year between 700,000 and 4,000,000 women are trafficked globally.⁷³

Some aspects of the revolution in information technology also gives reason for worry. While the IT revolution has proven a strong motor for economic 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.⁷⁴ It is a fact that sexual violence reported against women and children is on the rise.⁷⁵ 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, 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,⁷⁶ the

⁷² The 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-Warner, has tried for some time now to convince perpetrators to renounce the use of child soldiers.

⁷³ Theodor H. Winkler, *Slaughtering Eve - The Hidden Gendercide*, in Vlachova and Biason, *op. cit.*, p. vii.

⁷⁴ “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.

⁷⁵ See 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.

⁷⁶ 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.

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 the First World War nine out of ten victims were soldiers and only one a civilian, these figures have been inversed 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 industry⁷⁷) 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 over-fishing of the oceans, 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, South Ossetias and Abkhasias of this world to the 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,⁷⁸ the returning threat of pandemics and animal diseases,⁷⁹ the still much overlooked relationship between health and security in general,⁸⁰ the trend towards an increase in amok runs and “enlarged suicides” or even the bizarrely enough increased threat from piracy.⁸¹

Perhaps most important of all: the reality that the world views of the key players might be increasingly divergent is all too easily ignored. China, Russia, the United States, the European Union, the Islamic World, and other relevant international actors neither

⁷⁷ It is estimated that three out of four downloads are worldwide of pornographic nature.

⁷⁸ The problems are multiple indeed. In peace, private security companies that mushroom everywhere (in California there are today six private security company employees to every policeman) imply that security will in some parts of the world become a function of revenue. In conflict, the use of private military and security companies is ever more widespread. Thus, private military and security companies form today in Iraq the second largest international contingent with an estimated 40,000 men, outnumbered only by the US contingent. Their use is in many respects more than problematic: who defines, to illustrate the point, the rules of engagement of a Ghurkha soldier hired after his term with the British armed forces by a South African security company on behalf of Haliburton to guard an Iraqi pipeline near Basra? In general, the use of such forces erodes the state monopoly of legitimate force. It is not transparent. It also bypasses parliamentary oversight. For more information on the subject see Alan Bryden and Marina Caparini, *Private Actors and Security Governance*, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, LIT Verlag, Münster, 2006.

⁷⁹ Estimates concerning the likely number of victims of the next influenza pandemic vary widely (from 5 to 150 million dead). But even if the cost in human lives should be at the lower end of that scale, it is evident such a pandemic would cause substantial panic, disrupt global traffic and pose major security problems. The question is not whether there will be a large pandemic, only when it will come and how well it will be handled. See <<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/>>.

⁸⁰ Pandemics and HIV/AIDS are but the two most visible threats that create that link which is still massively underrated. Norway has made an important step in the right direction when it established, through the Oslo Declaration, a clear link between health and foreign as well as security policy. See *Oslo Ministerial Declaration - Global Health: a Pressing Foreign Policy Issue of Our Time*, Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DOI:10.1016/S0140-6736(07)60498-X, 2 April 2007.

⁸¹ See Martin N. Murphy, “Contemporary Piracy and Maritime Terrorism”, *Adelphi Paper No. 338*, the International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, July 2007, p. 108.

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 soon move towards such a joint vision.⁸² The values of the world to come are not necessarily those of the United States or the West in general. Nor is the United States any longer able to set the international agenda to the degree it had been able to do even a few years ago.⁸³ The willingness to listen to Western recipes is declining.

Security, which had almost disappeared as a key issue from the international political agenda in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, is back on that agenda again. The players in that game are today no longer necessarily the same as during the Cold War – nor are their priorities. We have entered another area of change. It is no longer perfectly evident which of the factors that appear today key will prove ephemeral and which will hold. In such a world the ability for successful change management will be at a premium. Sadly, not everybody can be trusted to be endowed with that ability.

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 will not. Human security is not on the rise, but remains a very precarious commodity indeed.
- Worse, the potential for violence seems to be 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, 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

⁸² It can be reasonably argued that the “colour revolutions” have largely failed.

⁸³ In economic terms, the trend towards a more multi-polar, post-occidental world is in full swing. By 2025 China is expected to be the world’s largest exporting country. The five richest nations on Earth will be the United States, China, Japan, India, and Germany. The share of the OECD states in the world’s GNP will have dwindled from 55% in 2000 to 40% in 2025, while that of Asia will have grown from 24% to 38%. By 2025, the share of the United States and Europe in the world’s overall population will have shrunk to 9%; that of Asia will increase to over 50%. See Nicole Gnesotto, *op. cit.*, p. 69 and 72.

not happy complacency, but action – 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’, those being 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 do enough of them right. Above all, we are only about to understand the complex interrelationship and interlinkages 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

The story of the famous Brazilian butterfly – which hastens, by flapping its wings, the melting of the polar ice caps – springs to mind. On our planet, all things are ultimately interlinked. Yet in order to come to solutions, problems need to be split into manageable sub-problems for which practicable – and affordable – strategies can be developed.

What are, therefore, the implications to be drawn from the global trends described?

First, we cannot look at trends in isolation, but need to develop a strategic, comprehensive vision. We need, at the political level, an overarching approach. In an increasingly vulnerable world, we need to decipher, and anticipate, the likely chain reactions triggered by specific events and longer term trends. 11 September 2001 was much more than a catastrophic attack on the World Trade Center. ‘Kyoto’ is not only an environmental or an economic issue, but at the very heart of the security debate as well.⁸⁴ We need to think outside traditional, well-defined boxes and come to a new – dynamic – understanding of security. This is particularly true because some of the boxes we are used to think in might be obsolete.

The United Nations have made a step in the right direction with Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s report *In Larger Freedom* of 21 March 2005.⁸⁵ It states that development, security, and human rights are intrinsically linked issues. There cannot be any development without

⁸⁴ This was clearly evidenced when on 17 April 2007 the UN Security Council held a session on the implications of global warming.

⁸⁵ UN document A/59/2005.

security.⁸⁶ 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 Kalashnikovs. And in order to build respect for human rights – as well as 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. There is no point in digging wells if somebody keeps poisoning them. Peace-support operations (PSO) are needed, but will, if not accompanied *at 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 undetermined (and in the long term, politically, financially and militarily untenable) nature. A credible and realistic exit strategy must – *from the outset* – 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) 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. It has, in an important move, fully integrated security system reform (SSR) and security sector governance (SSG) into the world of development cooperation.⁸⁷ The international community is likely to make these documents a point of departure for the development of a new tool kit in the triangle of security–development–human rights.

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 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.

⁸⁶ Global development cooperation funds today amount to some US\$ 106 billion per year. According to estimates a civil war costs, depending on the specific circumstances, anywhere between US\$ 5 and 54 billion 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, then the money spent on it will be the proverbial drop of water on a hot stone.

⁸⁷ A step that the IFI, notably the World Bank, still need to take.

- The rapid reaction capability of armed forces has been continuously improved – up to the point that, at least theoretically, substantial military forces can 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 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’s Response Forces and the EU’s Battle Groups. The real problem with these units is, however, that the probability that they will ever be deployed *as units* 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 full power projection tools in a routine fashion. The nation-state will, for quite some time to come, not delegate deployment decisions to supra-national organisations. The painful road towards a European Constitution (or at least a new European Treaty) bears witness to that. Real deployment patterns and institutional theory will, consequently, in all probability ever more diverge – be it with respect to NATO or the EU. There emerges, in short, a growing gap between what exists on paper and reality.
- 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.⁸⁸ If time would be on our side, that number should not grow, but decline. PSOs should be understood as a tool, not as an answer. It is time to focus not only on the likely missions of armed forces, but to develop a comprehensive, integrated view of what these missions should achieve and what additional – that is, 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 throw proven wisdom out of the window – such as having the commander on the spot in charge. Real-time communication capabilities at a level never reached in history has led to generals on an island in the Indian Ocean leading infantry squad operations in the Hindukush.⁸⁹ One shudders at the thought of what Winston Churchill, a brilliant (but sometimes over-enthusiastic) student of the military arts, would have done had he had such technology at his disposal – and then, clearly not everybody is a Churchill.

⁸⁸ Never before have there been so many soldiers and policemen engaged in international peace-support operations: 69,150 and 8,690 respectively (2006 figures; see *United Nations Peace Operations: Year in Review 2006*).

⁸⁹ See Sean Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die; the Untold Story of Operation Anaconda*, Berkley Books, New York, 2005.

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 on the receiving end. Yet every mistake will count. Political decisions of global significance 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, the United States finds itself, in the tactical arms race of hit-and-run operations, enjoying an edge over their foes that proves ever more slim.

Similarly, as the United States found out under then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld 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. For every man on the ground, four or five more are needed at home to maintain a reasonable rotation schedule. Should that ratio fall below 1:3 for any protracted period of time, the armed forces will be burnt out.

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 a worthy one, that national interests are at stake, and that there is light at the end of tunnel. If any of these criteria is not met, public support is bound to falter. Military operations cannot be conducted in a political vacuum. Public support is crucial.

This leads us straight to a third 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 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 – combining all aspects of the security sector (armed forces, 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 today is the 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 or peacebuilding mission cannot be assured on an ad hoc basis on the ground. That cooperation must, 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 genuine peacebuilding contingents composed of a coherent set of institutions that are able to form integrated, effective answer 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 solving them.

The ability to cooperate efficiently in integrated missions is indeed essential at the international, national and sub-national levels. In particular, the ability of PSO contingents to cooperate in integrated missions with non-state actors, including NGOs, is in this context crucial. 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.

No less important is the ability to deal with gender issues. Endemic, sometimes catastrophic, violence against women is today an inherent reality in many post-conflict situations. All too often PSO contingents and the international presence at large contribute to the problem by engaging themselves in the trafficking of women and other forms of abuse. Every field mission needs, consequently, to be fully prepared, trained, and equipped for these types of problems.

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 realistic chance for economic development, and thirdly putting in place the basis for the development of working political processes of a democratic nature. In real life, these three challenges will have often to be mastered simultaneously.

On a more general level, the new set of challenges we face, and the shifting face of violence we witness, render security sector cooperation across the board ever more urgent. Most new threats underline, in particular, the need for a fusion of intelligence to an unprecedented degree. There is a point to be made in favour of intelligence-driven security sector reform. This trend is, though, not without its inherent dangers. The question ‘who is watching the

spies?' becomes ever more relevant.⁹⁰ It cannot be that the very values the Western world wants to defend are undermined, if not ultimately jeopardized, by the way in which they are defended. If security sector cooperation and whole of government approaches are the future, a strict control and oversight of the security sector, based on the principles of civilian and parliamentary (and hence democratic) oversight, becomes as a result equally ever more indispensable.

The concepts of security sector (or systems) reform (SSR) and security sector governance (SSG) are indeed increasingly seen as key elements in coping with the growing global potential for violence. SSG and SSR are not only important tools in post-conflict 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 such strategic concepts and created inter-ministerial implementation mechanisms.⁹¹

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 coined, some years ago, the very concepts of SSG and SSR – has created a whole series of quality institutions that provide 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 to soft and hard security assistance components of the Union) whose implementation is rather 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 recognises 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 Partnership Action Plan on 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 SSG/SSR 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

⁹⁰ See Hans Born, Loch K. Johnson and Ian Leigh, *Who is Watching the Spies?*, Potomac Books, 2006.

⁹¹ In the case of Switzerland: the Inter-departmental working groups on SSR and on Regional Military Cooperation, both created in 2006.

European Union, main providers of both hard and soft security assistance, are called upon to play a particularly important role in this respect.⁹² Other actors, most notably NATO, the OSCE, as well as other regional and sub-regional organisations, should be encouraged to develop SSG and SSR strategies and approaches that are compatible with, and build on, those emerging in the context of the UN, the EU, and the OECD.

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 within the context 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 SSG and SSR, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF).⁹³ An international foundation with currently 49 member states, DCAF combines, as the only institution in the world, conceptual, analytical and operational capabilities in SSG and SSR. It is used by the international community as a centre of excellence and has been invited to contribute to the evolving SSG/SSR strategies, respectively the thinking and new approaches in this area by the United Nations,⁹⁴ the European Union, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, OECD DAC, NATO and ECOWAS.⁹⁵ Its research division provides every year some 10–20 books and dozens of studies and policy papers specifically tailored in a context-sensitive way 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 150 projects – ranging from assisting governments in drafting laws and national security documents through parliamentary assistance to 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. Tools like the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces are needed. They will, over time, have to become instruments that are able to respond quickly and efficiently in serving the entire international community.

⁹² The German EU Presidency has been initiating, successfully, a discussion on this very issue.

⁹³ For more information about DCAF see <www.dcaf.ch>.

⁹⁴ UNSC Presidential Statement of 20 February 2007.

⁹⁵ Partnership Action Plan in Defence Institution Building (PAP DIB).

List of Acronyms

ABM	Anti-Ballistic Missile
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
IFI	International Financial Institutions
INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force
IPCC	International Panel on Climate Change
ISF	International Security Forum
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PAP DIB	Partnership Action Plan in Defence Institution Building
PSO	Peace-Support Operations
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SSG	Security Sector Governance
SSR	Security Sector Reform
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WMO	World Meteorological Organization



Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)

The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) promotes good governance and reform of the security sector. The Centre conducts research on good practices, encourages the development of appropriate norms at the national and international levels, makes policy recommendations and provides in-country advice and assistance programmes. DCAF's partners include governments, parliaments, civil society, international organisations and the range of security sector actors such as police, judiciary, intelligence agencies, border security services and the military.

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