

International Crisis Management –Lessons to be learned from the Cold War

American Council on Germany

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I. “International Crisis Management” for Europe after WW II

The Alliance that was – as the events of 1989/1990 tell us and as the appearances makes us belief very strongly - a great success in its core business:

- to protect the members countries against a potential military aggression of the Soviet Union,
- to enable members states to secure themselves against clandestine communist undermining and infiltration and
- to protect the economic wellbeing and development of members states and their economic relations with the rest of world.

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In hindsight the time span from 1949 until 1990 appears with good reasons as the golden age of the North Atlantic Alliance.

In fact – the establishment of a meaning full transatlantic alliance based on the commitment of the United States – undertaken at a time of nuclear superiority – and for the first time in US history in peace time – to defend Europe against a Soviet attack as it would defends own territory against such an attack undermined the broadly held communist belief about the inevitability of mutual destruction of imperial powers in their drive for supremacy.

The emergence of the European Union under the protective shield of the North Atlantic Alliance ran counter the communist assumption about the eventual communist victory over capitalism as economic and social system. The European Union and socially rooted market economy unsettled communist and soviet assumptions about the developments that would and should take place in Europe after defeat of Nazi Germany.

Moscow expected to extend its control over Europe from the Soviet occupied countries to the Atlantic shores - based on strong communist political parties in these countries and on the assumption of the US military and political

withdrawal from the European theater of war thus repeating what had happened after WW I: The US decided the outcome of the war in military terms, but withdrew politically from the scene or were out-maneuvered by their European allies.

It has to be said to the credit of Winston Churchill that he engaged his prestige within the Western War Alliance to warn of Soviet ambitions and US allusions about the readiness of the Soviet Union to develop into a constructive world power. England was too weak economically to play a leading role in the reconstruction of that part of Europe that had not fallen under Soviet domination.

The Stuttgart speech of US Secretary of State James Burn (September 6, 1946) about the readiness to assist Europe to be rebuilt – including Germany – was followed by the Marshall Plan, that means the commitment of US government funds to serve as ignition for the Economies in Europe – outside the Soviet dominated area to restart. The Marshall Plan served as icebreaker for US entrepreneurial investment into Europe – however it would not have happened had there not also been a security pact of the two sides of the Atlantic. Under the international impact of the blockade of West-Berlin by the Soviet Union in 1948/49 and the successful Allied Luftbrücke that supplied West Berlin from airports in West Germany – for more than one year - the Senate of the US authorized with the ratification of the North-Atlantic Treaty in the spring of 1949 the commitment and deployment in peacetime of US forces to Europe and a nuclear guarantee.

Let me assure you that success-story of post war Europe would not have been possible without mutually supportive strategies of economic and security policies. In particular, in Germany we experienced a battle for the hearts and minds of Germany in East and West Germany between communist socialist ideas and policies on the one hand and the political campaigns to construe and develop societies on the basis of individual human rights, democratic state institutions, free and fair elections and socially rooted market economy – a system that not only a few in the US considered and may still consider to be basically a socialist system. That is definitively not the case! The partnership of capital, entrepreneur and labor as practices in today's Germany goes back to the economies of the free cities in Europe, notably in North Italy (Venice), Austria, Switzerland Germany and the Baltic region- as developed in the middle ages. In his travels to Germany Montesquieu discovered this reality in 1728/29. He praised the “free man in free cities”, as he discovered him during his trip to Germany in the beginning of the 18th century.

This Alliance went through many crises – according to the media it was always in crisis – the most sincere one in connection with the Sues Canal crisis in 1956, when President Eisenhower denounced the British-French-Israeli attack on

Egypt and the Soviet Union threatened France and Britain with nuclear warfare – and simultaneously the Soviet Union crushed the Hungarian uprising. Some Western broadcasters sent reports into East Europe that the West would intervene militarily in support of the uprising. A Group of Three Wise Men had to develop plans for the reorientation and re-establishment of a credible Alliance.

A severe challenge to Alliance cohesion were the Vietnam war, the Soviet military interventions to crash the uprising in East Berlin 1953, in Hungary already mentioned in 1956 and in -Czecho-Slovakia in 1968.

With great political difficulties nuclear weapons were deployed in Europe. The doctrine of gradual escalation in case of war constituted a certain relief in this respect. According to my experience with German Chancellors and Ministers between 1950 and 1990 none of them would ever have green light for the use of nuclear weapons against targets in Germany.

At one time, a communist government was to be established in Portugal after the removal of Dictator Salazar.

At all times, the public debate showed misgivings about non-democratic member states in the Alliance such as Portugal, Turkey and for a certain period in Greece. The teaching was that - under the threat of communist aggression - you need the support of many countries in order to protect effectively Europe – a free Europe.

Portugal was the bridgehead for supplies across the Atlantic in case of Soviet advances to the shores of the Atlantic, the North Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

II.

International Crisis Management in the Post-Soviet Era

Today East West conflict is history: we are not facing any longer a monolithic challenger, but we are confronted with dozens of conflict areas in all parts of the world. And we are confronted with non state aggressive cells – terrorist cells of religious fundamentalists and others. Such threats do exist within our societies. They can act at random in all parts of the world and hit assets, institutions, human beings, transit routes, airports, planes, maritime lanes of communication. Apart from crisis areas such as the Near and Middle East we are also facing on the global level a redistribution of economic and financial power – with the emergence of BRIC –states – Brazil, Russia, India, China and possibly South Africa – and many smaller ones spread all over the world such as Singapore, Dubai, potentially Iran and Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

The Strategic answer of the “Western World” world – the partners on both sides of the Atlantic – to these strategic changes will certainly include the

maintenance and further development of their military alliance. The strategic answer will be of a convincing quality, if it will be accompanied by the rapprochement of the civilizations from both sides of the Atlantic for instance by way of free trade zone, a project that is on the negotiation table now.. Such a “Customs Union plus” would mean acceptances of nationally defined norms for goods, services, education – may be complemented by guarantees for national cultural assets and values. Such mutual involvement would make it easier – and I refer to the European integration process under the security umbrella of the Alliance after WW II – to cooperate on issues of international security in crisis areas and on the invisible threat of terrorism and other threatening challenges such as drug traffic, trading with human being, etc.

The management of crises includes consultations and actions of the United Nations or actions authorized by the United Nations, among others on security issues in crisis areas. Implementation by NATO countries may include other countries ready to associate themselves with the UN authorized actions.

In the absence of a transatlantic security and economic pact and its credibility on the international stage both sides of the Atlantic would suffer on the international stage from any tensions between the two sides of the Atlantic. The common transatlantic economic zone or space would be like a magnet for others, which in turn would improve communication, understanding and agreements on common policies in a crises - for instance in the Near East.

It would reduce chances for upcoming power players from the regions to play Americans against Europeans and vice versa.

For quite some time, we must say in all frankness, Europe will not be an international power in terms of security and military policies. On the other hand, such a common economic zone would protect the US from falling victim to neo-isolationism and to imperial loneliness.

In a way, in my judgment, this kind of development, for which the Free Trade Zone is the new instrument and a credible concept, will be a valuable partner for the emerging new economic power centers such as China, India, Brazil – with a question mark for Russia. And Japan will be closely associated with the Atlantic zone –as it has been in the past.

The spectrum of cohesion or lack of it between the two sides of the Atlantic will be wide – I guess –wider than during the cold war – however antagonism will be excluded and deviations will be of tactical and operational, sometimes political nature – but countervailing forces in support of the common economic zone will be strong enough to absorb setbacks – that will come. Setbacks could lead to

growing distances, but could be contracted again, if there are sufficiently strong contracting forces on both sides of the Atlantic. We enter uncharted grounds!

Right now Snowden has produced with his revelation a crisis of confidence.

As I said: Friends do not spy against each other, and if you deviate from this doctrine you bear the political cost – credibility and trust. This is what happens in these days due to the unheard of dimension of collecting data of all sorts by compromising international and national communication networks.

You face a technical challenge – to protect yourself against abuse and inroads – and there is a political dimension of seeking a cooperative effort in this field. During the cold war you had foreign troops as allies on your soil, and the alliance had agreements ensuring that forces were looking after their own security in the host country but would have to cooperate within the country with the security apparatus of the host country. Violations thereof were admonished. There we have the ruling: Don spy against your friend, but cooperate with the country concerned. It appears that this dimension got lost in the context of world-wide gathering and storing of information (mega-data) for potential uses sometime in the future.

New weapon systems – drones and cyber war – as well as data banks need to be addressed in the context of the alliance and in cooperative bilateral consultations.

There may be questions on specific crises. I am not an expert in the Afghan, or the Pakistan or the Egyptian or even the Syrian crisis – never the less I may utter an opinion.

Let me conclude What Lessons can be learned from the cold war for the benefit of the crisis management in today's crises:

A strategic alliance was forged with mutually dependent components of political, military and economic segments, sectors and players.

Such an alliance may emerge with the common free trade zone as the overarching roof for a broad range of issues – for which solutions would hardly be within reach without common grounds on economic welfare and wealth.

1. It would be good, if nations could develop systematically the tools and strategies for the international management of crises in regions, countries, between nations
2. It would be desirable to overcome the notion that the nation's security depends primarily on military superiority and all-embracing secret intelligence. Such strategies are based on the assumption that world affairs are driven by

military, ideological or economic superiority and will be decided by the power of the superior in military terms.

It is true that history provides samples of this – lately in the 19th and 20th century.

I doubt whether China has opted for the goal of world domination.

The world is put at risk not by all out competition between two giants as was the case during the cold war, that was based on ideological and military confrontation of a gigantic dimension – communist und collective world on one hand and open society based on the dignity and the creativeness of the human being coordinated towards economic performance and military deterrence.

Today and for quite some time, global risks originate from ideological challengers – fundamentalists – unruly countries, regions, global competition for resources and markets. – a competition that cannot be won by arms.

3. The world community has adopted a number of rules for the management of crisis – in particular the United Nations mechanism, but not only those, but also regional coalitions, provided they are in conformity with the UN Charter and International rules of engagement and behavior – International law such as the human rights declaration of 1948 and conventions among others on the banning of torture and on ABC weapons with the exception of nuclear arms as agreed upon in the non-proliferation treaty and not fully complied with by the nuclear powers themselves.

4. In case of UN based sanctions there is a global understanding of a threat, for instance in the event of Iran manufactured nuclear arms.

5. In the case of “Bürgerkrieg” – Civil War – it is international, practice to seek armistice, peace talks, round tables, international conferences, sanctions, as well as ban on arm deliveries, since violation of internal law and in most cases of international law takes place on both sides - now in Syria on three sides.

In case of use of force by a government against parts of the population international outcry is strong and suggests international assistance – morally, politically, economically – and arms to the suppressed. A mandate of the UN is required.

Former colonial powers should be more restrictive in appliance of military powers – since it is immediately related to former colonial attitudes of superiority. Mind you, when the US supported the idea of a North Atlantic Alliance they pressured colonial powers of Europa to abandon as quickly as possible colonial possessions or rights in other areas of the world.

German reluctance of the early use of military power is not only related to the abuse of military potential for aggressive German war operations but also related to our understanding of the memory of countries that were under foreign control.

The civilizational links that emerged from colonial times is one thing, the appearance of a former colonial power as the military savior of a tense situation today sets free emotional resentments against the former colonial power or powers involved. The same concern you find in the post-Soviet world whenever Moscow claims regional predominance which is does today regarding the post-Soviet space.

In conclusion:

We should strengthen international crisis management, seek international agreement on the role of forces – secret and open operations – there is no difference between secret and open military operation in terms of international law, only the risk of political and the collateral damage is different – on the surface.

NATO supported studies could be undertaken for all crisis areas in order to develop various strategies with the use of different tools. A political initiative is needed in this context.

Thank you!