

**COOPERATIVE SECURITY IN CHALLENGING TIMES**  
**SVERRE LODGAARD**  
**NUPI**  
**TODA PEACE INSTITUTE COLLOQUIUM**  
**MARCH 28, 2017**

More than at any time after the end of the Cold War, security policies are focused on deterrence and defense, leaving little room for cooperative strategies. For lack of information and better judgement states act on worst case scenarios, and even on threat perceptions that are deliberately shaped in order to justify stronger defense and deterrence postures.

Europe and the Middle East, the two regions of security concern that I know best, illustrate the point. In three respects, the European security system is about as primitive as it used to be during the Cold War.

First, the Russian annexation of Crimea was a violation of international law: of the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the Budapest agreement of 1994. Foremost among the critics were powers that usually – i.e. more often than not – violate international law when using force. In this important regard, international law has become an argument of convenience, even in Europe. Effort should therefore be made to update and reinvigorate the norms, rules and standards of European security affairs, an important point of departure being the 10 principles of the Helsinki Final Act. To limit claims to special spheres of interest, no single nation or group of nations should have exclusive rights in the management of peace and stability in Europe.

Second, the institutional architecture is deficient. Institutions committing Russia and Western powers to address emerging conflicts at an early stage are missing. The OSCE is too weak, and the NATO-Russia Council breaks down as soon as conflict emerges. Europe needs institutions where the parties can meet as equals and discuss security issues as a common public good.

Third, action-reaction is the name of the game, as was the case during the Cold War. There is a tendency, moreover, to conduct international affairs in terms of crime and punishment, which is seldom helpful. In particular, sanctions without dialogue very rarely work as intended.

In the Middle East, there are wars and zero-sum struggles all over the place. A significant part of it revolves around the rivalry between Saudi-Arabia and Iran, in large part driven by the former who sees Iranians in most things happening around them. Moreover, what is forward defense for Iran, beginning in Syria/Lebanon, is a scheme for regional dominance seen from Riyadh, Washington and other capitals.

As ISIS is about to be militarily defeated, failed states have to be reconstructed and regional cooperation encouraged. Under what conditions can confidence-building measures of the kind elaborated by the Arms Control and Regional Security working group of the Madrid peace process be revived and reinvigorated? Does re-examination

of the proposal for a conference on security and cooperation in the Middle East have any traction? Niches for cooperative strategies must be identified and explored.

Turning to the nuclear field, today's name of the game is deterrence, with cooperative security a mere add-on. That state of the mind - the ingrained belief in nuclear deterrence - may be the biggest single obstacle to elimination. Of course, the vested interests in the physical manifestations are not to be belittled either, but they may be more manageable after all. Among ongoing military programs, missile defense is a particularly disturbing factor.

In the late 1960s, the United States convinced the Soviet Union that missile defense was destabilizing, and in 1972 the ABM Treaty was concluded. Eleven years later, Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative revived the idea. By now, the program has had steady support for more than 30 years, currently at the level of 7-8 billion dollars, and it seems to have gotten a life of its own. The nuclear deal with Iran made no difference for NATO's missile defense plans, only a slight adjustment of declaratory policy, and I am not sure that a solution to the North Korean problem would make much of a difference in East Asia either.

I am opposed to missile defense, not because I am a fan of mutually assured destruction. MAD is a telling abbreviation. Mutually assured destruction is counter-intuitive at that, because it says that you are best protected when naked. I am opposed to missile defense because it drives arms build-up. Other states are worried about their retaliatory capabilities and take countermeasures, and they are concerned about whatever technological breakthroughs the program may bring in other fields.

Defending the ABM Treaty, President Nixon said that if you have a shield it is easier to use the sword. Russia and China fear that if the United States continues to simultaneously improve its missile defense and strike capabilities - sturdier and speedier delivery vehicles and more precise weapons - it could thwart a Russian and Chinese nuclear response in the wake of a crippling initial US attack. Of course, these scenarios may never unfold: there would seem to be no reason why the US should go for a first strike, given the unprecedented risks involved. Still, Russia and China will do their utmost to preserve the credibility of their nuclear deterrents. Arms racing seem inevitable. There may be no more important single driver.

The impact is not confined to the nuclear field. The more effective the shield and the sharper the sword, the more aggressive you can afford to be against less capable, non-nuclear opponents. For instance, the better you can shield your bases and allies, the less risky an attack on Iran would appear to be.

On another issue - the nuclear ban negotiations starting in New York right now - Ramesh Thakur reminded us of the obligations inscribed in art.VI of the NPT. The P5, which are hard put to agree on anything these days, warn us that the ban negotiation "threatens the consensus-based approach that has served to strengthen the NPT regime". However, the longer they fail to live up to the disarmament provisions of Art. VI, the more unreasonable the call for consensus becomes. The list of measures that they referred to, starting with further work on the Glossary of Key Nuclear Terms, is meager to the point of being pathetic.

For alliance members who might consider attending the negotiation and, also, joining a ban convention at some stage, adoption of No-First-Use (NFU) postures offers a way out. Similar to the reservations made by parties to the Geneva Protocol - which prohibited the use of chemical and biological weapons, but in effect was an NFU agreement - they could sign on to the ban on the understanding that as long as nuclear weapons exist, this would be an NFU commitment. For the non-nuclear allies, this would necessitate a reservation to alliance nuclear strategy and that, admittedly, is no easy matter.

I join the pleas of support for the ban negotiation. NFU postures are an important intermediate milestone on the way. Such postures reduce the role of nuclear weapons to one and one only: preventing others from using theirs. An intriguing disarmament corollary follows: if nobody had them, nobody would need them.