

Non-Military Crisis Management as a Security Means in the EU

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Crisis management is a concept that can be read in a narrow or in a broad way. If we take crisis as a broad concept, much of our policies, internal or external, can be seen as crisis management. That would not make much sense as a guide for policy planning and making. Yet there is a current tendency to widen the scope of concepts like security and peace. I fully understand this tendency. The cold war forced a narrow view of what peace and security mean: the absence of war in the traditional, military sense. Security was freedom from coercion and it was often based on the balance of military power.

In today's Europe, there is no overall confrontation of hostile political and ideological camps. Instead, there are local or regional situations, where the threat of war or broad-scale violence is present. True, the potential of a confrontation between Russia and NATO is there, and the provision is still being made for deterring or winning such a conflict. But as the possibility for such a conflict is remote, a wide area of normal international exchange is free from the threat or use of force. In other words, in the Europe of today, security in the traditional, narrow sense is not threatened, except in certain regional or local contexts where an ethnic conflict may be the source of tension. This, of course, is not a minor exception.

Today, peace and security are seen as a web of interaction and co-operation, as the fulfilment of common and positive goals and the prevention of fundamental conflicts of interest. The focus is increasingly on fighting problems that are common to all: trans-border criminality, drug trafficking, communicable diseases, environmental hazards, etc. Societies and economies cannot function properly if those problems are rampant. Moreover, security involves the individual as never before: he or she is entitled to be free from such disturbances, be they international or domestic by origin.

Hence, the international community - admittedly, another tricky concept - is now pursuing security in this broad sense. Peace and security are not complete or satisfactory if they are not broadly based. On this, there is a wide consensus, more solid perhaps in Europe than in some other geopolitical situations. Policies and approaches are being developed keeping this concept of comprehensive security in mind. Much of it consists of lessons learnt from experience, all too often from mistakes.

The European Union has accepted the challenge. Internally, it is developing common policies for creating a zone of freedom and justice, relevant for the citizens. The summit of Tampere in October 1999 remains a recent landmark in this respect. As a broad embodiment of the international community the Union has a vested interest in preserving peace and security in its neighbourhood and beyond. It is by nature interested in peace and security in the comprehensive sense. In its vocabulary, stability is a key word and closely connected with political, social and economic transition. One can say that the Union aims at spreading its own image: integration based on democracy, freedom and justice and the related goals. It is promoting economic and social progress which is balanced and sustainable.

From the above, it follows that the EU is interested in and has an understanding and capability for developing methods of crisis management in the broad sense, both civilian and military. In relation to conflicts or crises, the external crisis-related activities of the EU can be divided in three: prevention, management and post-conflict action. In what follows, I am offering a few comments on each of these.

In the broad sense, much of the external policies of the European Union fall under the concept of **conflict prevention**. Here, the emphasis is on the civilian, non-military aspects, but not exclusively so. In essence, it is about demonstrating to all of its partners that it pays to observe the common rules relating to human rights, the rule of law, good governance and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Yet conflict prevention should be seen as an activity focused on identifiable sources of conflict or dispute. This is often easier said than done. It is not always a simple task to identify and determine at an early stage the source of the trouble. And it is not always a simple task to intervene from the outside in an intra-state or even inter-state conflict. There are norms of international law that govern such situations. In case of a failed state or the collapse of an organised government, an international intervention might make common sense, but legal grounds are lacking or underdeveloped. Kosovo in the spring of 1999 was a case in point and remains a subject of study and even a bitter controversy over what could have been done better to prevent the humanitarian catastrophes that ensued.

On this point, the research community has an opportunity to contribute with clear and sound ideas. Without making judgement on any current efforts, one can perhaps say that the international community is often applying the concepts and methods used in a previous conflict rather than facing the realities of a new one. Despite a plenty of lessons learned in the Balkans during the past decade, there are few reliable methods to draw from when the international community - and the EU in particular - is now coping with the current issues in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Kosovo, Montenegro) and Macedonia.

The importance of these situations cannot be over-estimated. There are good reasons to stick to the principle of respecting the existing state borders. But, as in the case of the Albanian populations, this principle comes with a cost. Consistency in international affairs is a hard rule to apply. Theory is no good guide.

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If prevention fails, **means of crisis management** must be resorted to. The principal asset of the EU will be in the broad variety of the instruments it can apply in any given situation. Understanding that many of the instruments are still to be developed, the EU will be a versatile actor in international crisis management. It will have a rich toolbox. Beside the military aspects of a capability for crisis management being developed within the Common European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), work is under way in four civilian areas: policing, the rule of law, civilian administration and civil protection. It will take years to reach the targets that have been set but the determination to do it is there. Significant concrete progress has taken place in the area of a policing capability as the first priority.

Non-military, civilian methods are to be preferred as they are less expensive than military methods but in real life there is rarely such a luxury of choice. The relative significance of the military and non-military instruments of crisis management always depends on the nature of the situation. If the crisis becomes violent, military means may be needed. It is equally clear that if the origin of the conflict is, say, of an ethnic kind, non-military methods are needed. Naturally, civilian methods should always be preferred if there is a choice.

The relationship between the civilian method and the military method is a crucial factor, but it will have to be determined according to the character and needs of the crisis at hand. Coordination of the overall action is another key function.

The third phase of crisis management is **post-conflict action**. It has become a commonplace to stress the need for the international community to be able to find an exit from a crisis situation, the termination of the operation. In practice, this has proven to be difficult indeed.

The parties to the conflict tend to develop a dependency on the outside operators or managers. The presence of the crisis managers provides parties with an excuse not to face the realities of the settlement of the dispute as a way back to normalcy.

The European Union has a unique asset in that it can provide the parties of the conflict a real incentive to settlement. The EU can promise the parties that they will become partners with the Union, including assistance in reconstruction and economic and social reform. And like in the case of the Western Balkans, the Union can open the prospect of membership.

In all of the stages of a crisis management operation the EU benefits from cooperation with third parties, non-member states, international and non-governmental organisations. Depending on the nature of the crisis, the EU need not necessarily be the leading operator.

So far the focus has been on a social or political conflict, on a man-made crisis. There can also be a crisis originating from a **natural disaster**. The significance of such crises to the society concerned can be enormous and therefore call for broad external assistance. In the earthquakes in Turkey and Greece in 1999 the management of relief operations with international involvement had a profound impact on the relations between Turkey and Greece as well as Turkey's standing as a member of the European family.

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By way of **conclusion**, one can stress that a pointed distinction between the military and the civilian in crisis management is not useful. While resource development must focus on each special case, and policy planning must be comprehensive. The European Union has the benefit of a broad competence although some of its assets remain underdeveloped and the decision-making is sometimes cumbersome. Planning and management must be crisis oriented, not resource oriented.

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