

Note on Workshop WS 44 – The Military : “Defence and Security”

1. Background

This note presents a fairly exhaustive panorama of all the subjects that can be considered. It is probably very ambitious. Chinese and European participants, as well as the organizers of the forum, are asked to submit any objections, suggestions or proposals they may judge to be useful.

The workshop will mainly comprise senior officers, active or retired, who will be working on the contribution of the armed forces to “defence and security.”

“Defence” is more especially concerned with protection against threats coming from abroad. “Security” addresses threats not explicitly connected with military aggressions. Seen from another angle, looking after security is bringing peace and preventing conflicts. Defending is preserving independence and territorial integrity, safeguarding values and protecting basic interests. **It is easy to see that today the two terms are closely, or even inseparably connected.** The **defence and the security of a state** therefore aims to ensure, in all places, at all times, and in all circumstances, the integrity of the territory, the protection of the population and the preservation of national interests against all types of threats and aggressions. They also involve respecting international alliances, treaties and agreements. Their purpose is to ensure the **freedom, security and prosperity of the citizens of a state.**

The workshop will concentrate on the military aspects, but these will obviously have to be placed in the general context (economic, social and cultural). It is important to understand exactly what we are defending. Defence and security policy is part of a state’s general policy.

The armed forces of a state can deter, through their existence and their posture, any potential aggressor, participate in crisis management operations, **protect** the interests of the state and **engage military action**, for self-defence to resist against an invasion, or in outside arenas for various motivations, which can in fact be more-or-less legitimate. In this latter case, they can be engaged in a national framework,¹ within a coalition, under a United Nations mandate, or under the mandate of an international organization. In Europe, there are citizens who question the interest of the these

¹ This is increasingly rare, especially for former colonial powers

“overseas operations,” which are not directly connected to the vital interests of the country nor to direct threats to their national territories or their surrounding area. There are several possible answers to this questioning:

- a distant crisis can turn into direct threat, and it is best that the international community should intervene as early as possible to “put out the fire”²;
- a military tool takes a long time to build (more than 10 years) and is expensive to maintain; it is designed to deter and possibly to face an unlikely direct aggression in high-intensity combat: there is added value when carrying out “noble” missions for the benefit of the UN;³
- states have a moral obligation to contribute to UN efforts to attenuate suffering in the world.

War was, for a long time, the usual way to settle conflicts (following up on politics with other means, as argued by von Clausewitz). This led to the mass bloodshed of the twentieth century. Fortunately, high-intensity wars on a world scale seem highly unlikely today, at least in the short and medium terms.

Nonetheless, we are far from living in a peaceful world. New threats are appearing, raising serious challenges to the international community: terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, transnational criminality, etc. Long and painful intra-state conflicts (the Balkans, countries in Africa), dissymmetrical wars and conflicts (the first Gulf War, the invasion of Iraq in 2003) or asymmetrical ones (Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Chechnya) are still devastating the planet.

Both China and the European Union would like to see a global governance, based on multilateralism, that would consider the use of force as the ultimate recourse under the auspices of the United Nations. But the UN remains weak and is often seen as powerless. According to its Charter, Members of the UN are to abstain, in their international relations, from resorting to threat or the use of force either against the territorial integrity or the political independence of any other state, or in any other way that is incompatible with the goals of the UN. On the other hand, any state has the right to defend itself militarily against direct attack. Otherwise, on decision by the Security Council, states can volunteer to put their forces at the disposal of the UN to maintain (Chapter VI) or to enforce peace (Chapter VII). Any state therefore has the right to have armed forces for reasons of self-defence, which, depending on its political choices and its resources, are capable of action to bring violence under control (low-intensity), of coercive action (high-intensity), or of humanitarian action for the benefit of the international community.

² According to the frequently used metaphor, putting out a fire requires a glass of water in the first few seconds, a fire extinguisher in the first few minutes, and after that an army of firemen with the associated damages.

³ but poses the problem of the polyvalence of the means.

At this point, we are clearly moving into a subjective area. An important effort seen as necessary by a state to defend itself can be interpreted by another as the sign of a potential threat of aggression. This is where bilateral and/or multilateral dialogue is needed to avoid a conflict ensuing from a lack of mutual understanding.

The European Union, which has become a large economic power, is not united politically and is unable, as experience has shown, to speak with one voice at the diplomatic level despite a stated common foreign and security policy. National cultures and historic traditions, particular links with certain parts of the world and diverging interests prevent it from doing so, which is highly regrettable.

Nonetheless, at the defence and security level, even though things are far from perfect, slow and inexorable progress is observed. After centuries of violent conflict, the European Union states finally live in peace. And yet it would be in their interest to join their efforts to face common threats, to defend common values and interests. Europe also has global responsibilities. **It must become a power based on wisdom**, contributing to world peace.

European countries do not all devote the same financial effort to defence, however. Some states are not part of NATO. Others are part of NATO as well as in the EU and are attached to the idea that collective defence against an external aggression should remain a matter for NATO. Others see Europe's defence as complementary to NATO, considering that Europe should be self-sufficient for any action in which the US would not want to get involved. It is therefore out of question to speak of a European army for the time being. Yet, the European Union does now have a security and defence policy, the central aim of which is to reinforce its capacity to act outside of Europe through the development of its civilian and military capacities in matters of international conflict prevention and crisis management. It has adopted a European Strategy for a United Europe in a better world.⁴ It has its own Military Staff, an operations centre, a defence agency, and tactical battle groups of 1,500 men. It has set out ambitious objectives: 60,000 men available within 60 days for a one-year period. It is moving toward its overall objective for 2010: greater interoperability, enlargement of the Petersberg missions to operations of demobilization, disarmament, reintegration, qualitative capacity development, reduction of intervention-delay time.⁵ It has been able to successfully complete numerous operations, such as ARTEMIS and EUFOR in the Democratic Republic of Congo, ALTHEA in Bosnia Hercegovina (in progress), etc. Above all, it has a global crisis approach, both civilian and military, which is envied by NATO.

⁴ Solana, 2003.

⁵ Less than 10 days between the engagement decision and the start of deployment

2. Workshop breakdown

Sessions 1 and 2: Improving mutual understanding

The aim of these sessions is to draw up a picture of the geostrategic environment, seen from the Chinese side then from the European side. The starting point will be to agree on the meaning of the words being used, to do a semantic analysis of the terms defence and security, and of the concept of global defence (military, economic, and civilian),

Other objectives are:

- to analyze the various crisis factors at stake: energy, water, mining resources, religions, ideologies, the impact of global warming, etc.
- to analyze the risks and threats, in the short, medium, and long term (classic ones, but also those linked to weapons of mass destruction, to criminality and to terrorism).

This will lead to answering the following questions in particular:

- What are the interests – vital and major – of Europe and China?
- What values are to be promoted, defended, for Europe, and for China?
- Are there common, universal values, for humankind as a whole, for all civilizations (human rights, democracy, etc.)?
- Is it necessary to fear a civilization clash, or confrontation, in particular in the Pacific Ocean zone, and what would be its impact on the various players involved?

Then an inventory will be drawn up of the respective defence and security policies, strategies, concepts and use-of-force doctrines, in answer to the following questions:

How do Europe and China ensure the security and defence of their territories, their populations, their strategic supplies, their citizens abroad, etc.?

What capacities and military means do they develop: land, sea, air, and outer space? For what purpose?

What is their conception of the use of force, when necessary and in the framework of international law:

- for violence-control operations(also called peace-keeping, low-intensity, operations other than war)?
- for coercion operations (peace enforcement, high-intensity warfare)?

What is their conception of conducting an asymmetric-type conflict? What engagement rules should the military forces be given? Is it acceptable to engage them and leave them impartial and powerless, when facing war crimes or crimes against humanity? What are therefore the criteria and prerequisites for their engagement?

Session 3 - Common responsibilities; how to avoid conflicts and to act in favour of peace and security in the world

How can Europe and China contribute to a multilateral global governance that is a factor of peace and security?

When and how can crises be prevented and potential aggressors be deterred?

When and how can action be taken when it is necessary, when needs exceed the international community's capacities, and on the basis of what objective criteria?⁶

How can action be taken efficiently without getting bogged down in a theatre of operations (to be able to play "first in, first out"), when the problems to be solved are not strictly within a military scope and require a lot of time?

What can/should be the role of the UN, the European Union, China, the Atlantic Alliance, and regional organizations (the African Union, etc.), and the US?

Session 4 - Joint action on common challenges: What should defence and security relations be between China and Europe for a better assumption of their global responsibilities?

This is the assessment and conclusions session. It should provide an answer to the following question in particular:

What specific forms of cooperation and exchange can be considered between Europe and China in the realm of defence and security?

Europe, a zone of peace, has the ambition to establish peaceful relations with the world, starting with its immediate surroundings. Does China not have the same grand plan in Asia? How can these two objectives be combined in such a way that they mutually reinforce one another?

⁶ This is often done under media pressure.