

Qian Wenrong

A Comparative Analysis of Security Structures in Europe and Asia

The creation and development of any security structure are closely related to the political, economic, social and security situation as well as the cultural tradition and history in the specific region. Europe and Asia are the two continents adjacent to each other geographically, but their security structures have always been quite different due to the sharp distinction in their respective geopolitics, economic development level, social situation, cultural tradition and history.

However, after the end of the Cold war, the fundamental change in international relations and the world political pattern as well as the rapid development of economic globalization have made the two neighboring continents not only ever more interdependent economically, but also more and more closely related in security interests to each other. This paper will discuss the development trends of the future security structures in Europe and Asia and their interaction on the basis of reviewing the changes in the European and Asian security structures in the Post-cold war era.

I. Changes in European and Asian security structures in the post-cold war era

During the Cold war era, the United States and the Soviet Union confronted each other and put their strategic focus on Europe. Therefore, the European security structure was characterized by two antagonistic military blocs – the U.S.-headed NATO created in 1949, and the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact established in 1955. But, after the Cuba crisis in 1968, a multilateral security dialogue mechanism began to take shape in the early 1970s. At the suggestion of the Soviet Union, in the name of the Warsaw Pact, the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was created in 1972 with the participation of 35 countries. At the same time, the Soviet Union also agreed to the U.S proposal to set up a mechanism for talks on disarmament in Central Europe. As the channels for security dialogue between the two military blocs, the two mechanisms had played certain positive role in relaxing tension between the East and the West during the Cold war time.

Unlike Europe, Asia did not have such multilateral security co-operation mechanisms and dialogue channels during the Cold war era. The pluralistic political and economic structure and co-existence of different military forces in Asia made it impossible to create the same multilateral military blocs and dialogue mechanisms as the ones in Europe. After the Korean war, the United States had tried to create a NATO-style multilateral military bloc, such as the 8-nation South East Asian Treaty Organization and the 6-nation Central Treaty Organization, both created in 1955. But the two multilateral military organizations had to be disbanded in 1976 and 1979 respectively after the withdrawal of Pakistan from the South East Asian Treaty Organization in 1968 and the withdrawal of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey from the Central Treaty Organization and the downfall of the King in Iraq. Just as Mr. Richard Solomon, the former U.S. assistant secretary of state in charge of Asia-Pacific affairs, pointed out in 1990, the multilateral military organization held no appeal to Asian countries.

But there were many bilateral security arrangements in this region. Shortly after the end of world war, the United States began to build what it called “a chain of islands” in the Asia-Pacific region, fringing the coast of Asia which starts from Japan and runs through Ryukyu, Taiwan, the Philippines, and ends up with Australia and thus signed a series of bilateral military treaties, such as “The Treaty of Mutual Defense between the United States and the Philippines” (August 30, 1951), “Japan-U.S. Security Treaty”(September 8, 1951), “The Military Aid Agreement between Thailand and the United States” (1950), “The Mutual Defense Treaty between The Republic of Korea and The United States of America” (July 27, 1953), and the U.S.-Taiwan “Mutual Security Treaty” (December 2, 1954). As a result, a network of military alliances for “containing communism” in the Asia-pacific region was formed. As a counter-measure, the then Soviet Union also signed a number of bilateral military treaties under different names with China, North Korea, North Vietnam and Mongolia

separately. But, most of the Soviet-sponsored treaties already ceased to exist except in name even before the end of the Cold war. This was in the sharp contrast with the continuously strengthening of the above-mentioned American-led bilateral military alliances.

Since the end of the Cold war, there have been drastic changes in security situations in security structures both in Europe and Asia, which will have a significant and even decisive impact on the future development of the security structures on the two continents.

In Europe, the confrontation between the two military blocs ended with the demise of the Soviet Union, thus essentially changing the strategic military posture in Europe. Therefore, the United States and its European allies have to change their strategic disposition in Europe and the question on the establishment of a new security structure in Europe has also emerged on the agenda.

As is known to all, both NATO and Warsaw Pact were the products of the Cold war. The Warsaw Pact was dissolved shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but NATO, on the contrary, has been strengthened and expanded eastward step by step. In November of 1991, the NATO summit decided to shift its main task from coping with the Soviet threat to preventing and resolving conflicts in Europe and managing crises. It also stressed that one of NATO's new functions was to establish partnerships with the former Soviet republics and East European countries.

In January of 1994, the NATO summit in Brussels officially put forward the proposition on the eastward expansion and decided to establish "partnership for peace" with all members of the former Warsaw Pact and all non-NATO member countries in Europe with a view to creating conditions for the NATO expansion and the creation of a security cooperation system in Europe. Today, NATO has established "partnership for peace" with 27 countries, mostly in Europe and former Soviet Republics.

In May 1997, NATO also decided to set up the "Europe – North Atlantic Partnership Council" with 44 member countries, including all NATO member countries and 27 countries of "partnership for peace" as well as Tajikistan, the sole non-partnership for peace member in the Commonwealth of Independent States. Thus NATO can foster and select the candidates for NATO new members from among so many countries.

Moreover, "The Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and The Russian Federation" was signed in May of 1997 in order to dispel Russia's worries and remove the resistance to NATO eastward expansion.

In 1999, NATO successfully admitted Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary as its new members, increasing its total number of member states from 16 to 19. Thus, NATO's first phase of eastward expansion plan has been realized and the political and military structure in Europe has been further changed.

Furthermore, NATO and Russia signed the Rome Declaration on the establishment of new "NATO—Russia Council" in May 28, 2002, in which Russia becomes one of the members of the "20-nation mechanism". In its strategic consideration, the United States attempts to make Russia no more threatening to it and no longer being opposed to NATO eastward expansion. NATO is the security arrangement in Europe and but it has always been dominated by a non-European state. After the end of the Cold war, the disappearance of the military threat from the former Soviet Union has led to big changes in the relationship between the West European countries and the United States inside NATO. West Europe becomes militarily less dependent on the United States, while the international status of the European Union has been enhanced and its awareness of the need for independent defense been increased. Especially the Kosovo war made the European Union ever more aware of the fact that only when Europe has its own independent defense, would it not be led by nose by others. Therefore, the EU summit meeting at Cologne in May 1999 decided to incorporate the West Union, the sole military institution in West Europe, into the European Union by the end of the year of 2000 as the first step and in December 1999, the EU's Helsinki summit further decided to set up a "rapid reaction force" composed of 50,000 to 60,000 troops. Nevertheless, the European Union seems to find it very difficult to play an independent and major role in defense affairs in Europe for time to come due to the difficulties in setting up such an independent force and obstruction from the outside in particular.

The CSCE was re-named as the "Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe" (OSCE) on January 1, 1995, expanding its membership from 35 to 54 countries including all

European and Central Asian countries as well as the United States and Canada, and thus has become the first trans-Eurasian organization for security cooperation in the region of Europe. But, it has so far played little role since the end of the Cold war. In resolving the Balkan conflicts, the OSCE accomplished nothing mainly because the United States didn't want it to play any role. It had to stand aside and the role it had played as a dialogue channel between the two military blocs during the Cold war already disappeared.

Thus, it can be seen that after the end of the Cold war, the security structure in Europe has changed from the bipolar structure during the Cold war to the basically unipolar structure dominated by the United States. When we say "a basically unipolar structure" just because Russia still is not a full member of NATO, but it will be limited by NATO in the decision-making of the security and defense in Europe in the years to come.

There has also been tremendous change in the security structure in the Asian region during the last 10 years or more since the end of the Cold war, but the situation is quite from that in Europe. The specific feature of the change in the Asian security structure is that while the United States continues to strengthen its bilateral military alliances, there have emerged non-American-dominated multi-level multilateral security cooperation and dialogue mechanisms in this region and a new concept on security.

In his address at the Waseda University in Tokyo in July of 1993, the then American president, Bill Clinton, for the first time put forward his idea on the establishment of a "New Pacific Community". Canada and Australia have also suggested setting up a European-style security and cooperation structure in the Asian-Pacific region. But all these propositions have not received positive response from most of the Asian countries.

In fact, on the one hand, Americans have time and again reiterated the "firm and continuing commitment of the United States to maintain its treaty alliances and its forward military presence in Japan and Korea and throughout the region,"¹ and regarded them "as a bedrock for America's security rule in the Asia-Pacific region."² In view of the lack of a NATO-style multilateral military alliance, the United States has in recent years organized all or part of the member states from the bilateral military alliances to participate in a series of multinational military maneuvers so that these bilateral alliances can be joined together when necessary to serve the U.S. strategic purpose and maintain American's dominant position in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia.

But, on the other hand, multilateral security cooperation has been forging ahead rapidly in Asia due to the readjustment of the relationship between big powers and the continuously strengthened economic cooperation. After Malaysian prime minister Mahatir first proposed setting up the post-cold war security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region in 1991, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has made great efforts to push forward the regional multilateral security cooperation through official (known as "track one") and quasi-official ("track two") channels. Today we already have three levels of multilateral security cooperation -- official, quasi-official and non-governmental.

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was set up in 1994 as the first inter-governmental arrangement of multilateral security cooperation to conduct dialogues on regional security issues. Up to this year, ARF has held 9 foreign ministers' meetings with the participation of the foreign ministers from 23 countries and the European Union as a collective member and become the most important vehicle for security dialogue in this region. In the last 8 years since its founding, ARF has implemented nearly 80 Confidence Building Measures (CBM) projects and played a significant role maintaining peace and stability in this region. But its main focus remains on the security issues in Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia.

Progress has also been made in sub-regional security cooperation. For instance, Central Asia, which was almost forgotten during the Cold war period has drawn more and more attention from the world community in recent years, particularly after the September 11 terror attacks. The five neighboring nations -- China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kirgistan and Tajikistan signed "the agreement on confidence-building in the military field in the border areas" in April 1996 and "the agreement on mutual reduction of military forces along their borders" in April 1997. They are the first two agreements on multilateral confidence-building measures and multilateral disarmament in the Asia-Pacific region. Afterwards, the "Shanghai 5-nation mechanism" was set up and then evolved into the 6-nation "Shanghai Cooperation Organization" (SCO) in 2001 with Uzbekistan's participation as one of its six co-founders. At

the second summit held in St. Peterburg, the heads of state of the six nations of Shanghai Cooperation Organization signed the Charter of SCO, an agreement on anti-terrorism agency in the region, and the Declaration of heads of State of the SCO members. The documents have once again expressed the determination of the member states to strengthen regional cooperation and maintain and promote peace and development in the region and the world at large.

At the initiative by president Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, the First Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia was held in Almaty and adopted the "Almaty document" and the Declaration on Eliminating Terrorism and Promoting Civilization Dialogue. This was the first forum sponsored by a Central Asian country that drew the leaders from 16 Asian countries to get together and discuss the issues on security and cooperation in the region. This is another positive development in mediating internal conflicts within the region and maintaining regional and world security.

Moreover, the Council for Security Cooperation in Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) as a "second track" came into being in 1994, the same year of the founding of ARF, which plays a role of guide, advisor and consultant for ARF members to work out regional security policies.

The non-governmental dialogue on security cooperation in Northeast Asia began in 1993 between China, Japan, Russia and South Korea, the United States. We also have Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) which, despite a multilateral economic organization by nature, can make indirect contribution to the regional stability and security. Terrorism as a non-traditional security issue was discussed at the APEC leaders' meeting held in Shanghai last October.

It is worthy to note that the above-mentioned three levels of multilateral security cooperation in Asia are based on a new concept of security, which seeks regional or sub-regional comprehensive security and common security through dialogue, consultation or negotiation. The core of such new security concept should include mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination. The new security concept is, in essence to rise above one-sided security and seek common security through mutually beneficial cooperation. Therefore the security cooperation is not just something for countries with similar or identical views and mode of development, it also includes cooperation between countries whose views and mode of development differ.

The main distinction between the new security concept and military alliances based on hegemony and Cold-War mentality is that the former does not set any common enemies, nor target at any third parties but is determined to avoid military conflicts or wars, while military alliances are directed at one or more common enemies (including potential enemies) and set their strategic objectives to deter the enemies or win the wars.

Briefly speaking, the new security concept advocates new three Cs policy (co-existence, complement and cooperation) to replace the old three Cs policy (confrontation, coercion and containment). The SCO is a successful case of the new security concept.

II. Future development trends of European and Asian security Structures and their interaction

A) According to available information and reality, the future development trends of the European and Asian security structures can be more or less described as follows:

1/ On the European continent, following the completion of its first phase of eastward expansion, NATO will hold a summit meeting in Prague in November to decide on the plan for the second phase of expansion and the list of new candidates for admission. Up to now, there are 9 countries who have applied for NATO membership and have been included into the "Action plan of admission". They are Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovak, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Slovenia and Macedonia. Recently, Ukraine also has expressed desire for NATO membership. Once the entire plan of NATO eastward expansion is completed, the geopolitical map in Europe will be completely changed.

2/ Meanwhile, the European Union's efforts to build its independent defense capability will continue and the rapid reaction force is expected to take shape in 2003 as schedule. However, It might be able to only perform some humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping missions but could hardly take relatively large military action in coming years because the new-type

weapons and other equipment will not be made available until 2006 and the EU must take more time to well coordinate its relationship with NATO on the activities of the rapid reaction force.

3/ Although Russia has become a member of NATO's "20-nation mechanism", it is still worried about the NATO eastward expansion. Recently, Mr. S. Karaganov, deputy director of the Institute for European Studies of the Russian Academy, has advocated a new security system and a new international security treaty in Europe to meet the new challenges in the 21st century. He pointed out that the "Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe" (CFE Treaty) signed in November 1990 should become a touchstone of the European security, but in reality it has never been brought into due play. Today, it has been more incompatible with present needs in the wake of NATO's eastward expansion. Since the admission of the East European countries into NATO has become a reality, he said, it is imperative to consider new measures to strengthen confidence in Europe and necessity for a new document which should stipulate that all new NATO member states should not permit the deployment of NATO forces and military equipment, particularly nuclear facilities on their own soil.³ In his article published by "Nezavisimaya Gazeta (Independent Newspaper) on August 8, Mr. Alexei Meshkov, Russian deputy foreign minister, also stressed the need for a New Security System in Europe and called for renewing the role of OSCE as a dialogue forum on an equal footing. As early as in November 2000, Mr. Apotolos Kaklamanis, president of the Greek parliament, already proposed to establish an independent security system in Europe. He said such a security system must be created under the joint supervision by the Western European Union Assembly, the European Parliament and the Parliaments of all European countries. So, it can be seen that the question of what kind of a new security structure Europe should have in the new century, remains an unresolved issue. It will depend upon the future development of the political, security and economic situation in Europe and particularly the future role the EU can play in Europe and the world as well as its relations with Russia and the United States after the EU completes its reform and expansion and sets up a real independent defense system.

4/ On the Asian continent, while the United States continues to strengthen its bilateral military alliances in this region, a multi-level and multi-channel multilateral security cooperation structure will continue to forge ahead and become more and more mature.

(a) ARF will continue to play a major role as a main regional mechanism for multilateral security dialogue, in which ASEAN will continue to play a leading role..

(b) Dialogues between big powers (China, Japan, Russia and the United States) can be carried out in parallel with the regional and sub-regional multilateral security cooperation. They will coordinate and supplement each other.

(c) Bilateral and multilateral security dialogues and cooperation arrangements are two parallel channels and must not be contradictory to each other.

(d) The first track (official dialogues) and the second track (semi-official and non-governmental dialogue) will develop simultaneously.

5/ On the prospect of ARF, the United States, Australia and some other countries have called for its institutionalization, such as creating a decision-making regime and formulating some implementation regulations for preventing disputes that might lead to armed conflicts. In its document "The ARF into the 21st Century" presented to ARF earlier this year, CSCAP made a number of proposals on the institutionalization of ARF, such as the establishment of an ARF secretariat headed alternatively by an ASEAN and a non-ASEAN member on one-year term, adoption of a code of conduct known as "Pacific Concord" which seeks to encourage member states to abide by agreed norms of behavior conducive to regional stability and peaceful settlement of dispute, and development of conflict resolution mechanisms. Similar proposals also have been presented by Brunei as the ARF chairman of the current year. But, no decision has been made so far on these issues, although the institutionalization of ARF in conformity with the regional characteristics is an inexorable trend.

6/ The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) will continue to deepen its cooperation in the field of security between 6 member states, particularly will further strengthen the fight against terrorism, splittism and extremism so as to maintain a peaceful and stable environment in this region. Moreover, since SCO is an open regional organization, more countries are

expected to join it in the future. There are some countries who have expressed desire for membership.

Meanwhile, more countries also will be expected to participate in the newly born “Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia” so that this forum will make greater contribution to promoting and maintaining peace and stability in Asia.

B) The security interests between Europe and Asia will be interacted more and more closely, but a proper model of security cooperation between them remains to be explored.

1/ The “9.11” incident clearly shows that in today’s world, security threats tend to take diverse forms and go global. Economic globalization has led to the mingling of economic and security interests of countries and their closer links. The connotation of security has expanded from the military and political to economic, scientific and technological, environmental, cultural and many other fields. Therefore, Europe and Asia will not only be more deeply interdependent on each other economically, but their security interests will also be ever more closely related.

2/ Until now there have been two ideas about the establishment of a trans-continental security system between Europe and Asia. One of them is the so-called trans-Eurasian security system put forward by Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, former national security adviser to the U.S. president, in his article “A Geostrategy for Eurasia”. According to his proposition, such a transcontinental arrangement might involve an expanded NATO linked by cooperative security agreements with Russia, China, and Japan. But, he stressed, to get there, Americans and Japanese must first set in motion a triangular political-security dialogue that engages China. Such three-way American-Japanese-Chinese talks could eventually involve more Asian participants and later lead to a dialogue with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. That could eventually pave the way for a series of conferences by European and Asian states on security issues. A transcontinental security system would thus begin to take shape.⁴ The purpose of this idea is obviously to maintain the U.S. leadership on the two continents and thus serve the American global strategy for establishing a U.S.-dominated new world order. But given the current trend of continued multi-polarization, such an idea will not be acceptable to most of the European and Asian countries. In his comment on Brzezinski’ idea, Former German chancellor Helmut Schmidt said the trans-Eurasian security system is “a somewhat unconvincing attempt” to lump Lisbon, Tokyo, and Vladivostok all together in which “the United States is supposed to call the shots” and to “secure the United States’ global hegemony”.⁵

The other idea is to build a “world stable arc”. This idea was put forward by Russian president Vladimir Putin in May this year. He said that the word should have a “stable arc belt”, and within this framework “a promising world security organization” could be established. He assumed that The “stable arc belt” will involve Russia and other members of NATO “20-nation mechanism” on the one side and , China and other Asian countries within the framework of Shanghai Cooperation Organization on the other side, and between them the newly established 6-nation Collective Security Treaty Organization which includes Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Belarus and Armenia. But President Putin stressed that the most important thing is that all members within this stable arc belt should be equal and none of them will be permitted to call the shots.⁶ It is now unlikely that the United States will accept such an idea.

3/ Therefore, it might be a comparatively practical formula to establish a trans-Eurasian security dialogue mechanism on the basis of the current Asia-Europe meeting without the participation or interference from outside the two continents.

Since mid-1990s the European Union began to pay ever more attention to the emerging Asian region. In 1994, the EU Commission adopted for the first time an important policy document called “Towards a New Asia Strategy”, which defines EU’s new policy towards Asia. In the same year, EU presented to the first ARF meeting the document “EU’s view on ARF”, expressing its strong desire for participation in Asian security dialogue. In 1996, the first Asia-Europe meeting was held in Bangkok, capital of Thailand, thereby establishing a dialogue mechanism between Europe and Asia. At its initial stage, the Asia-Europe meeting focused on economic issues but at the third meeting held in Seoul in 2000, the dialogue had been expanded to the political, security and cultural fields and several regular dialogue mechanisms

on varied issues at different levels have been set up. This is another example to show the trend of multi-polarization.

With the closer economic and political ties and terrorism and other non-traditional security factors on the rise in international security, it is necessary to establish closer and more effective security cooperation mechanism between Europe and Asia. Therefore, it might be useful and helpful to further strength on cooperation between Asian and European scholars to explore a practical tran-Eurasian security system in the future.

Notes:

1/ Address by President Clinton to Students and Faculty at Waseda University, July 7, 1993

2/ "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement," published by The White House, July 1994, p. 23

3/ S. Karaganov: "Europe needs a New Security System", ITAR-TASS August 7, 2002

4/ Zbigniew Brzezinski: "A Geostrategy for Eurasia," Foreign Affairs, vol. 76, no. 5 October 1997

5/ Helmut Schumidt: Review of Zbigniew Brzezinski's book "The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives", Foreign Policy, Spring 1998

6/ Russian newspapers "Pravda" (Truth), April 19, 2002 and "Utro" (Morning Newspaper), May 27, 2002
