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***Session V: The Role of Europe:***

**European Experience and Perspective on Regional Cooperation and Regional Organizations: Relevance to Northeast Asia**

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## Introduction

Can certain national interests in the era of globalization be served better—or at all—by solely national or bilateral approaches, or are there common interests and issues that can only be pursued by cooperating in a multilateral format? Some might argue that bilateral or trilateral arrangements would suffice, but it is generally agreed that there are interests that can be served and options created only through more inclusive regional cooperation, and that these options and benefits would not be available to any one nation state, no matter how large, acting on its own. The OSCE and EU experiences offer many examples of this.

The time for regional security cooperation is not when a crisis has started. This is one of the hard lessons being learned from the present, severe global financial crisis. It thus becomes essential to have such a mechanism in place before crises become imminent and unmanageable.

The creation of an effectively and efficiently functioning regional security cooperation mechanism is an example of developing a systemic response to actual and future threats and challenges. It also takes the system to a higher level of organization, with the associated options or benefits, but also balanced by certain agreed constraints, all of which work in the interests of all involved. It is not a zero-sum game, as shown by the experience of regional cooperation in Europe..

This presentation will focus our on three essential concepts: cooperation, regional or multilateral systems, and sovereignty/political will and their interconnectedness. It will look at the role of regional cooperation and regional organizations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and how an understanding of the characteristics and requirements of multilateral systems facilitate their creation, management and survival. It will address these issues and suggest why, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, states will increasingly find it in their interests to create, participate in and support regional cooperation and multilateral organizations

## Evolution of Cooperation and Connectedness

Multilateralism is evolving because, among other things, the concept of connectedness is evolving. From the imperative of empire we have arrived at the necessity of cooperation, in the form of a cooperative association of sovereign entities, joined by the pursuit of common interests rather than pursuit of power or control. Globalism has emerged as another manifestation of connectedness. Multilateral organizations represent a special form of connectedness.

The world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been characterized as a global world, a result of the effects of increasing globalization. But globalization has not made the world flat. The world is complex, connected and changing. Previous centuries already experienced global trade, communication and movements.

What distinguishes the 21<sup>st</sup> century are the new technological and other capabilities to overcome the limitations of space and time, namely global reach and impacts, instantaneous transmission of information and ideas, and new and constantly evolving networks—as well as the capabilities of certain states to project massive military power in increasingly shorter times.

Globalization has permitted the development of international systems for trade, finance, media, research, the international system (or regime) for nuclear nonproliferation, and, indeed, the international system of terrorism. Globalism is characterized by the connectedness and interdependence of its component parts. Insofar as all globalization is ultimately local, a logical unit of cooperation among nation-states is the regional forum.

## International and Regional Systems

The post-World War II order saw the creation of a number of international organizations regimes, which have functioned with varying degrees of effectiveness, efficiency and equity. It can be argued that at the present time there is a perceived need and tendency in the direction of multilateral regional mechanisms, which complement and support these international regimes, helping them to achieve their original goals both regionally and globally. The EU and OSCE are examples of this, as are the nuclear weapons free zones and free trade agreements in various regions.

In this connection, we may now be in a period where security, trade and other issues, while having an important global component and impact, are primarily perceived as regional problems or threats, to be dealt with in the first instance on a regional basis. We may then consider that a global or international system is or can be built up from a combination of regional subsystems. If successful, the whole will be greater than the sum of its parts.

Regional proximity and connections have often provided a basis not only for cooperation but also for conflict. Both stem *inter alia* from the inherent connectedness of the countries and peoples in the region, which can lead to both common and conflicting interests.

Until recently, the main driving force of nation-states has been the acquiring of military and economic power in order to prevail. Many states and leaders still see this as the *sine qua non* of sovereignty. However, after the experience of centuries of innumerable wars, including two devastating world wars, Europe tried a new approach, and succeeded. Through cooperative regional mechanisms, states were able to pursue national and higher-level interests with new options unavailable to any individual state. And this was accomplished without the use of force, without creating dangerous instabilities and threats. The prime motive for European regional cooperation was political stability and security. It has exceeded all expectations, and has led to an unprecedented period of peace and prosperity.

Elsewhere, powerful states which consider themselves in possession of the capability to achieve national interests unilaterally now acknowledge that cooperation is necessary to deal with both traditional and non-traditional threats and conflicts. This has been a clear and direct acknowledgement of the connectedness of states' interests and threats, and of the need to go to the higher level of regional and ultimately global cooperation to serve national interests and goals, and to maintain stability and security.

Thus, nation-states, no matter how powerful, acting alone, are no longer in the position to achieve and defend unilaterally all of their interests nor to deal with an increasingly broad spectrum of present and future threats and instabilities. This places important limits on unilateralism. States, exercising their sovereignty to achieve a higher level of cooperation and organization, thus gain options and benefits that would not be possible on an individual basis. Political will leading to a cooperative and creative use of sovereignty in certain issue areas can, therefore, achieve a far greater impact and deal with far larger issues than any sovereign state acting on its own. Globalism and the increasing awareness of connectedness on the regional and global levels have made this even more apparent.

Key questions are, therefore, how can a multilateral regional organization or forum be created to serve the interests of and create options for individual participating states, which no state acting on its own could do? How could such regional mechanisms, taken together, achieve a more robust global equilibrium and order?

## Political Will and the Evolution of Sovereignty

Multilateral mechanisms and organizations are the result, among other things, of the political and security environment, political will and the pursuit of individual and collective interests.

Since political will is intimately involved with sovereignty, it is important and relevant to look at the OSCE and EU experiences in terms of sovereignty, or what may be called the creative and cooperative use of sovereignty. The issues surrounding the concept of political will and sovereignty, in particular the equal and inviolable traditional sovereignty of nation-states, runs throughout all discussions and negotiations regarding the creation and functioning of cooperative multilateral mechanisms/organizations, especially in the security area.

In connection with this it is important to note that in the CSCE/OSCE as well as in the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), in contrast to matters concerning EU economic integration, decisions are taken on the basis of consensus; with very few exceptions. Decisions are thus directly related to and dependent on the creative and cooperative exercise of sovereignty to agree to politically binding measures and obligations which bring forward the process of enhancing transparency, confidence and security.

In exercising sovereignty and demonstrating political will in a timely manner, states can create a mechanism which itself becomes an example of preventive and pro-active

diplomacy, trust and confidence-building. This represents an evolution in the concept of sovereignty since the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century Treaty of Westphalia.

Preserving the prerogatives of sovereignty, and national identity, is seen as a vital interest. Thus arises, for some states, a zero-sum game between sovereignty and multilateral cooperation. While an imposed or perceived diminution of sovereignty (political, economic, cultural) with no net benefits can foster extreme reactions which can become destabilizing not only for a country but for an entire region and, by extrapolation, globally, a cooperative use of sovereignty can lead to the creation of a higher-level of organization which provides far more benefits and options for security and development than an individual state could have.

The sovereignty which came to many countries with the end of colonialism, communism and other types of imposed control is guarded jealously, and seen as an absolute good in and of itself. While certain former communist countries have seen their interests far better served by exchanging some of their sovereignty for the far greater benefits of EU membership, other states, not only newly independent states, have in general been unwilling or unable to accept that, as Raymond Vernon once said, „one of the most important things you can do with sovereignty is to negotiate a part of it away on favorable terms“.<sup>1</sup> But this was exactly the basis on which the EU could be and was founded.

In connection with the diminution of sovereignty, there is increasing tension between the mostly unregulated effects globalization and the ability of individual states to take and implement national economic and political decisions. A key impact of globalization on the nation-state is both the real and the potential loss of power and identity. Thus, globalization represents the most serious challenge to sovereignty, and multilateral cooperation a way to deal with this.

## Role of Cooperation in Regional Organizations

Mechanisms for regional cooperation represent complex, evolving systems with the associated behavior and characteristics, in particular, the requirements for dynamic stability. A system's capability to respond to actual and potential threats and instabilities depends on its being able to achieve--through adaptability, innovation and cooperation--new options and a continuously changing, optimal balance between the options and constraints for its component parts.

Through cooperation, new possibilities or options can be created and agreed that would otherwise not exist. Here one can associate options with the degree of possibilities or diversity in the system, for example, the unfettered exercise of sovereignty or freedoms in a society – and constraints or regulations with negotiating away a (small) part of sovereignty on favorable terms, for example, to achieve binding rules and agreements on

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1 Raymond Vernon: International Economics Lectures, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 1980.

the control and elimination of WMD (including the necessary information acquisition and exchange, transparency, verification and control). Resources can be made available on a cooperative basis that would not be available otherwise. Thus, multilateral cooperation leads to a higher level of organization with more and better capabilities for innovation, adaptation, stability and development.

Cooperation, however, plays yet another important role: Options which are imposed, rather than being cooperatively devised and agreed, are neither perceived nor accepted as options but rather as constraints, with the corresponding reactions, rejection and potential for instability. That is, if a situation exists in any functioning multilateral system whereby one state or a group of states regularly impose options or constraints, this will sooner or later result in real or potential crises, conflicts and destabilization of the system.

Thus, multilateral cooperation is in itself an option for, and complementary to other types of, political order in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, offering new possibilities for systemic stability, crisis management and prevention, as well as for pursuing the individual interests of its participating states and of the group of states as a whole.

Despite the importance attached by some states to capabilities for unilateral action and for the use of force in an attempt to realize national policies and achieve national interests, cooperative behavior is not, nor should it be, an option of last resort. On the contrary, it should be seen as the first option for dealing with real and potential crises and threats, for creating and enhancing transparency and trust, and for upholding and implementing agreed principles and values. Active cooperation, involving many elements, has a solid basis in *realpolitik* and provides the broad and binding support needed to achieve dynamic stability. *Realpolitik* also acknowledges the need for capabilities to defend vital interests by the threat or use force as an option of last resort.

Regional organizations must be on the forefront of developing and supporting a new regional and global order with its associated cooperation and capabilities. All of this places new requirements on the leadership and management of such organizations.

### **Management of Complex Regional Systems: Certainty of Response instead of Certainty of Outcomes**

Management of complex regional systems requires new approaches and capabilities. Complex systems encountered in the real world are subject to uncertainty, uncontrollability, surprise and chaos. Therefore, while desirable or acceptable outcomes in an event or crisis can be identified and strived for, certainty of outcomes is not even theoretically possible. One is forced to deal with too many uncontrollable and indeed unknowable factors. Under such circumstances, it is necessary to try to achieve desired/acceptable outcomes or goals through attaining a 'certainty of response'.

Certainty of response is a fundamental requirement for the effective management and dynamic stability of any self-organizing and self-regulating complex system. Capabilities of response involve a new role and importance for information, communication, innovation, adaptability and cooperation. Thus, managing complex systems places new

demands on the qualifications of individuals and leaders, and on the requirements for the development of cooperative political, economic and security systems.

Understanding and guiding a complex system thus requires something more, a new ‘standpoint for seeing and judging events’<sup>2</sup>, a new concept or paradigm, in order to deal with the realities, environments and challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

‘Certainty of response’ means that a complex system, its component parts and those responsible for managing or guiding these, must develop and possess the principles, processes and capabilities to:

- Anticipate and recognize potential threats/instabilities in the system and its environment
- Anticipate and take pro-active measures for, rather than simply reacting to, events, developments and risks
- Anticipate and assess possible as well as likely outcomes of decisions and actions
- Deal with uncertainty, surprise, chaos—as the ‘normal’ state of affairs—on a timely basis
- Innovate and cooperate in order to develop the necessary options, policies and strategies in response to threats and actual/potential instabilities
- Balance options, where needed, by new constraints, self-regulation and rules

## Relevance of the OSCE and EU Experiences for other Regions

In Europe there is now a relatively long history and experience regarding multilateralism and regional cooperation, which has been on balance very positive and successful, serving the interests of the individual member states and the group of states, while providing benefits and options that no country alone could have achieved. These organizations have enhanced the stability, security and prosperity of their members and of the region. The experience of European multilateral organizations is thus useful and relevant for other regions.

It is important to remember that the OSCE and the EU were created to achieve and enhance political stability and security and were initially concerned with institution-building. The early phases of the OSCE were concerned with ways and means to foster peaceful co-existence and diminish threats and threat perceptions. The post-World War II EU project was basically a political project to ensure that armed conflict would not again occur in Europe. The objectives of this political project were approached and achieved primarily but not only through economic integration. Now, the EU has an increasingly active foreign and security policy.

A relevant part of EU experience for multilateral cooperation in Northeast Asia concerns the nascent EU process for agreeing on and implementing its common foreign and security policy, whereby much has already been achieved, through unanimity, with

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<sup>2</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Editors/Translators M. Howard, P. Paret, Princeton University Press, 1976, p.606

little or no relinquishing of sovereignty (in contrast to EU economic integration). In the areas of foreign policy, security and defense the EU member states have given up and want to give up little if any sovereignty, yet have managed to agree on an EU rapid reaction force and defense agency as well as other common initiatives.

The Lisbon Treaty, which has not yet entered into force, formalizes the principle of an EU Common Foreign and Security Policy. This has increased cooperation within the EU and its ability to act in these areas. The essential authority still lies with its Member States, but the European Commission and the European Parliament are involved. The CFSP includes an EU rapid reaction force for tasks such as peacemaking, peacekeeping, crisis management. An essential element is the capability for early warnings in crisis situations.

The Treaty increases cooperation in traditional security areas as well as nontraditional security areas such as: combating terrorism and transborder crime, energy policy, public health, climate change, civil protection and research.

The Lisbon Treaty provides major progress in terms of the common security and defense policy and a critical step towards development of European defense. It introduces the “mutual defense clause” whereby if one of the EU Member States is attacked, the others are obliged to provide it with help. It also introduces the “solidarity clause” in which the EU and each of its Member States have to provide assistance by all possible means to a Member State affected by a human or natural catastrophe or by a terrorist attack.

It also extends the EU’s potential in terms of the fight against terrorism, conflict prevention missions, post conflict stabilization missions etc. and introduces ‘permanent structured cooperation’ open to all Member States who commit to taking part in the main European military equipment programs and to providing the EU with combat units available for immediate action. These states are therefore prepared to fulfill the most demanding military missions on behalf of the EU, particularly in response to requests made by the United Nations. The UN Security Council has authorized an EU stabilization force in Bosnia and another stabilization force has been proposed for the Caucasus and possibly in Lebanon.

The Helsinki process leading up to the Helsinki Final Act involved negotiations that were, at that time, among states associated with opposing blocs, systems and values, and they succeeded because of the prevailing political environment in that period, political will and perceived benefits to each state involved. The success of CSCE/OSCE and other forms of regional cooperation depends on recognizing that the process of realizing an effective multilateral cooperation mechanism is not a zero-sum game - what increases the security of one country will not and must not diminish the security of others, on the contrary. The Helsinki Final Act and the subsequent achievements of the CSCE/OSCE – including its comprehensive security concept - show how necessary political will and active cooperation are if multilateralism is to succeed.

Understanding the political motivations, environment and processes leading to agreement on the Helsinki Final Act, as well as the HFA itself, are of special relevance for institutionalizing a cooperative security mechanism in the Northeast Asia. The three key



areas or baskets of the HFA could find counterparts in such a cooperative multilateral mechanism.

Based on this experience, regional cooperation and organizations can provide the basis and framework for, among other things:

- Defining and agreeing on fundamental principles, aims and values
- Bridge-building among states with different histories, cultures, perceptions and systems
- Regular, constructive dialogue and discussion
- Developing options to deal with traditional and non-traditional security threats and other issues of common interest
- Peaceful settlement of disputes
- Crisis and conflict anticipation, prevention, management
- Flexible and practical CSBMs to enhance transparency, trust and security: for example, measures for enhancing mutual understanding and correcting misperceptions; constraints on provocative activities
- Joint risk and threat assessment
- Timely and sufficient information exchanges
- Identifying relevant and useful negotiating techniques and methodologies
- Clearinghouse functions
- Humanitarian assistance
- Links with other regional and international organizations
- Pursuing interests by and for all members

This is a period of transition for many regional and international organizations, and the OSCE and EU are no exceptions. New environments, new issues, new challenges and opportunities, but also criticism, must be dealt with innovatively and flexibly while maintaining the agreed principles, values and aims on which these organizations were founded. The OSCE and EU are important examples of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts, and of the importance of regionalism and cooperation to achieve stability, security and development in an increasingly globalized and competitive world.

Recent examples of the effective functioning of European regional organizations include the EU's brokering of a cease-fire in the Russia - Georgia conflict and the agreement of all 56 participating states of the OSCE to send up to 100 monitors to monitor the agreed cease-fire and support humanitarian assistance, including 20 unarmed military monitoring officers.

## Implications for Creating and Maintaining Multilateral Cooperation Mechanisms and Organizations

The idea of institutionalized multilateral regional cooperation in East Asia is not new, but one whose time may now have come. A multilateral institution cannot be created in times of crisis, and it is thus essential to have such a mechanism in place before serious crises become immanent and unmanageable.

The historical, political and economic development of states in the region has reached a point where they perceive their interests to lie not only in a multipolar balance or in specific bilateral security arrangements but also in multilateral cooperation on a regional basis, which is required to address issues affecting both individual states and the region generally. A stronger trend towards multilateralism and international cooperation in the region appeared in the East Asian region starting at the end of the last century, brought about not only by new political policies and aims, economic prosperity, and increasing non-traditional threats to security and stability but also by the Asian financial crises. Policies for new or enhanced cooperation focus on the economic/financial, political, security (both traditional and non-traditional), environmental, energy and cultural areas. This reflects *inter alia* the awareness that there are critical regional and transborder issues and challenges which no country, no matter how large or powerful, can deal with on its own, and on which it is in the interests of sovereign states to cooperate.

China's present foreign policy consists not only of diplomacy with neighboring countries, large powers and developing countries but also of participating in international organizations and other multilateral forums, as well as enhancing its soft power. Japan's political role is now evolving commensurate with its economic power and its view of its international and regional responsibilities.

The DPRK and developments in its nuclear weapons program have played a determining role in the political and security policies and structures of the Republic of Korea. If this North Korean issue can be peacefully resolved, this could be a catalyst for and support development of multilateral security arrangements in the region. The manner in which the issue is resolved will have an important influence on whether and how the institutionalization of cooperation and multilateralism in the region can proceed to a new level.

When discussing taking Northeast Asian regional cooperation to a higher level, especially concerning security issues, the role and position of the United States is a critical consideration. The U.S. 'hub and spokes' web of bilateral security alliances and other military/security arrangements with countries in the region may be compared with the historical security role of the U.S. in Europe and its attitude towards creation of the EU and indeed the OSCE. The U.S. attitude and policies regarding multilateral cooperation in Northeast Asia stands in contrast to the support it gave to the formation of the European regional organizations, and is more like the skeptical U.S. stance towards the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and related matters.

The interests and concerns of all powers in the Northeast Asia region may be served by starting a multilateral security cooperation process within the framework of the Six-Party Talks' Working Group on a Mechanism for Peace and Security in Northeast Asia.

Initial steps towards multilateral cooperation in Northeast Asia could include a roadmap for institutionalizing multilateral security cooperation in the region through gradual steps which could include agreeing on measures to enhance transparency, trust and confidence.

Another example of how regional cooperation can enhance not only regional but international security and stability is the creation of nuclear weapons free zones, in various regions (Latin America and the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, South Pacific, Africa, and Central Asia). This is a crucial issue for Northeast Asia and a goal which, with hard work and political will, could be attainable. Here again one encounters an example of global issues being addressed and, it is to be hoped, solved on the local, regional level.

### Concluding Remarks

When considering a process for institutionalizing a cooperative security mechanism in Northeast Asia, three key areas which could be addressed include: Firstly, important traditional and non-traditional security-related issues, above all the North Korean nuclear issue and the denuclearization of the Korean peninsular, but also transborder issues and threats; a second key area could build upon the already intensive and extensive cooperation among the Northeast Asian countries in economic areas (trade, investment, finance) as well as cooperation on energy and environmental issues; and a third key area could focus on identifying fundamental principles, common interests, humanitarian issues and bridge-building. The content of these key areas could develop in time and in parallel. Cross-cutting issues would include all measures which contribute to trust, stability, security and development.

While acquiring and maintaining adequate military capability to counter security threats and defend vital interests is clearly necessary, it is not sufficient. Achieving a functioning and sustainable global order will demand more than this: it must be based on agreed principles and aims; on moderation; on mutual respect and advantage; and on cooperation to deal with threats to stability and ensure survival and development. Force should in principle be the option of last resort. Ultimately, the survival and endurance of any complex system will be based not simply on power but on the capability to recognize and cope with the ever-changing environment, conditions and actual/potential instabilities which threaten the essential patterns and processes of the system both from within and without. Evolving systems and order, whether on the regional or global level, will prove to be defined and maintained not primarily by force but by basic principles, values and cooperation.