

RE-CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SOFT SECURITY AND TURKEY'S CIVILIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

The mix and method regarding how hard and soft security policies are implemented in times of crisis and conflict are still contentious issues. There is a substantive amount of discussion among scholars and experts on how to make the best use of these policies. The common denominator in such discussions seems to be that the elements of soft security are of a rather preventive nature and best employed to reinstitute stability and introduce normalcy in afflicted areas. The author argues that through enhancing cooperation and dialogue, as well as extending financial assistance and development programs, the aim now is to neutralize the potential violent nature of soft threats and prevent them from becoming hard threats in the long run. He also discusses Turkey's contribution to international security both in hard and soft terms in a vast geography ranging from the Balkans to Afghanistan.

Uğur Ziyal*

* Ambassador Uğur Ziyal is the Undersecretary of Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The demise of the Soviet bloc not only marked the end of the Cold War, but also led to fundamental paradigm shifts in the international system which was predominantly formulated by the victors of the Second World War. One of the defining characteristics of the post-Cold War era has been globalization. Though this is not a totally new phenomenon,¹ coupled with the effects of technological development and high-speed communication, it has had a tremendous impact on peoples and states, as well as on military doctrines and international security. Moreover, the effects engendered by globalization have, by definition, pros and cons.

As a consequence of these developments, theories of international relations are being revisited and there is an abundance of new concepts, as the field of international relations undergoes re-conceptualization process. In this process, practical aspects of interaction of states, non-state actors and other players in international relations have once again become issues of debate.

Paul Kennedy is known for his analysis of the dilemma that states face in developing a viable military policy. The dilemma he referred to is about the choice between guns and/or butter and investment.² One can argue that this has been a continuous dilemma for contemporary policy makers. To what extent should governments allocate funds to develop military capabilities? Given the scarcity of resources, should military budgets be decreased and greater emphasis placed on economic investment? How can the optimum balance; if any; be attained? In theory, answers to these questions basically hinge on how governments perceive the concepts of “national interest,” “mutual interest” and “common interest.”³ Answers to these questions may also require a choice between hard and soft security policy instruments as potential tools for furthering interests. Indeed, even states which are members of the same organization, adopt different approaches and act on the basis of different priorities.

As a result of such differences, we face today a deep gap in strategic perceptions and strategic culture.⁴ However, Western states, in tandem with their partners/allies, have for some time now been seeking to align and harmonize their reviewed concepts in order to achieve synergy in tackling a plethora of crises.

In this context, an important novelty in the post-Cold War era is the changing nature of the methods employed in dealing with regional conflicts. The mix and method regarding how hard and soft security policies are implemented in times of crisis and conflict are still contentious issues. There is a substantive amount of discussion among scholars and experts on how to make the best use of these policies. The common denominator in such discussions seems to be that the elements of soft security, which I will address in the second part of this paper, are of a rather preventive nature and best employed to reinstitute stability and introduce normalcy in afflicted areas.

I believe that it will be easier to understand the underlying rationale of soft security policies if a conceptual framework is outlined first. Therefore, I will initially touch upon the conceptual background and later outline Turkey’s civilian contributions to international security.

¹ Amartya Sen, “How to Judge Globalism,” *The American Prospect*, Vol.13, No. 1, January 1, 2002 – January 14, 2002.

² Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers* (London: Fontana Press, 1988), pp. 691-92.

³ For a brief analysis of these concepts, see Selçuk Cingi, “Birleşmiş Milletler ve Bütünleşmeyen Dünya,” *İ.Ü. Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi*, Nos:11-12-13, (Nisan-Temmuz-Ekim 1995), pp.115-16.

⁴ Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power, America and Europe in the New World Order* (London: Atlantic Books, 2003), p.27.

Soft Security: A Conceptual Framework and Comparison of Existing Systems

Security is defined in terms of perceived threats and risks. Particularly in today's complex environment, it is surely a multifaceted and evasive issue.

In essence, security deals with preventing or containing threats. There are two categories that can be used to define threats: (a) Hard threats and (b) Soft threats. Terrorism and weapons of mass destruction are generally accepted as hard threats, whereas extreme poverty, disparity among and within societies, and the spread of infectious diseases or climate change and environmental degradation fall under the category of soft threats.⁵ This list is by no means exhaustive. One can add, for example, inter-ethnic conflicts,⁶ illegal migration and trafficking in human beings to the list of soft threats. Cyber threats, which can inflict enormous damage to the economic and social infrastructure of countries, are also considered as soft threats.

In reality, there are no clear-cut dividing lines between hard and soft threats. They are inter-linked and require a comprehensive and inter-disciplinary approach.⁷ In fact, a soft threat can easily turn into a hard one. Making profit from illegal migration in order to finance their illicit activities is a good example of how terrorist organizations transform a soft threat into a hard one.

No doubt, economic prosperity is an end-goal for all states. The attainment of this basic goal is closely linked to the establishment of security and stability, which, in essence, constitutes a *sine qua non* for sustainable development. Conflicts impact negatively on daily life and have the potential to preclude and in fact arrest development.⁸ Therefore, soft security policies emerge as an important tool in creating a favorable and safe environment, conducive to economic and social progress. By definition, policy formulation in this field is an inter-active process between the targeted region and the state/organization concerned. In order to be effective, this requires a dynamic and well-coordinated state policy, buttressed by pro-active diplomacy. Soft security policies entail a long-term strategy, coupled with financial commitment.

A substantial difference between hard and soft security policies is that states traditionally resort to conventional methods such as deploying military forces to provide hard security. In soft security policies, however, the use of conventional military force is neither automatic nor preferable. However, the availability and use of soft security policy options is a function of the situation. For instance, if there is room for interacting with the local/central authority, non-military means, including social and financial assistance can be utilized with a view to prevent a spiral of instability. Such methods vary depending on the political and social fabric of the region/state, as well as its level of economic and financial development.

⁵ Kofi Annan, "Secretary General's address to the UN General Assembly," 23 September 2003, New York. Available at: <http://www.un.org>.

⁶ For a different perspective on the reasons of inter-ethnic conflicts, see Fared Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs*, (November-December 1997), pp.22-43.

⁷ Kofi Annan, "AIDS is the real weapon of mass destruction" Africa Recovery, United Nations News Releases, December 2003, <http://www.un.org>.

⁸ Stiglitz argues that conflicts are to some extent unavoidable. Joseph Stiglitz, *Globalization and its Discontents* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), p.247. Counter arguments against Stiglitz have been voiced earlier by Kissinger. See Henry Kissinger, *Does America need a Foreign Policy, Towards a Diplomacy for the 21st Century* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001), pp.212-14.

If there is a post-conflict situation, one might consider the need for consequence management. As such, it would be necessary to concentrate on the rehabilitation of possible damages in the social fabric, focus on enabling a return to normalcy in political and economic life, as well as the reestablishment of state activities. This may also require a comprehensive nation-building process, as in the case of Afghanistan, in which an intensification of international efforts, political and financial in particular, takes place.

In hard security issues, although there is an increased role for civilians,⁹ they are mostly complementary, whereas in soft security missions, civilians pioneer the effort. Participation of the civilian sector and effective inter-agency cooperation in implementing soft security policies are indispensable. The value of civilian expertise, particularly in the fields of public information and other non-military activities in general is of indispensable nature. It is the civilians that maintain daily contact with the local people and play a primary role in the implementation of soft security policies. As to inter-agency cooperation, civilian components of security policies are both developed and implemented with the expertise of the relevant government institutions and agencies. Therefore, apart from the need for well-trained personnel and infrastructure, a constant and effective consultation mechanism must be in place. The role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is crucial, yet this role depends crucially on their area of interest and capabilities. The end-goal is to create a sustainable system in the targeted region/state, such that outside assistance is no longer required and all forms of threats, soft and hard, have been rendered insignificant.

Some concrete examples of soft security missions are NATO's operation in Afghanistan and EU police operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia. The KFOR (Kosovo Force) and SFOR (Stabilisation Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina) operations, as well as the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, however, are hard security missions of a military nature.

On the other hand, in the field of non-proliferation, the case of Libya constitutes a striking example of a state, which, having been the subject of intense diplomatic efforts for many years on a sustained basis, decides to voluntarily relinquish its secret Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) programs.

Thus in the post-Cold War era, states can no longer afford the luxury of waiting until soft threats evolve into hard ones, no matter how distant they may be, since in an era of globalization distance has become a relative concept. On the contrary, through enhancing cooperation and dialogue, as well as extending financial assistance and development programs, the aim now is to neutralize the potential violent nature of soft threats and prevent them from becoming hard threats in the long run. This is done through effective civilian-military cooperation in theatre.

Within this framework, international organizations have reviewed their structures and procedures vis-à-vis conflicts. The United Nations, having the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security as enshrined in its Charter, has begun to focus mostly on conflict prevention strategies. As elements of soft security policies, building national capacities and supporting the role of civil societies with the help of specialized UN Agencies, have been the priority areas of action for the UN. The guiding principle therein has

⁹ "Statement by the President of the Security Council," S/PRST/1999/34, 30 November 1999.

been its commitment to the principles of the political independence, sovereign equality and territorial integrity of all States.¹⁰

The UN was also active in multidimensional peacekeeping operations, in which the responsibilities of civilians increased significantly. Among these responsibilities are the following:

- Enabling former adversaries to implement complex peace agreements by liaising with a range of political and civil actors,
- Coordinating the delivery of humanitarian assistance,
- Assisting with the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants,
- Supervising and conducting elections,
- Strengthening the rule of law, including assistance with judicial reform and training of civilian police,
- Promoting respect for human rights and investigating alleged violations,
- Assisting with post-conflict recovery and rehabilitation, and
- Setting up a transnational administration of a territory as it moves towards independence.

These tasks also serve as guiding principles for other international organizations conducting soft security missions as well as their civilian components.

However, as the UN found itself engaged in an increasing number of complex emergency situations,¹¹ this also placed such a significant burden on its financial and human resources that it became overstretched. This is indeed an issue that needs to be further elaborated.

NATO, on the other hand, which was conventionally characterized as a static,¹² hard security and defense organization, has undertaken an ambitious transformation agenda. It has also included soft security policies in its portfolio. NATO's role in Afghanistan is a case in point. The Alliance took over the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) on 11 August 2003. This is NATO's first mission beyond the Euro-Atlantic area. With the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1510, ISAF's mandate was extended beyond Kabul. NATO is in Afghanistan in order to help bring peace and stability throughout the country. To this end, NATO developed the "Provincial Reconstruction Teams" (PRT) concept, a practical tool of interaction between the Allied countries and the Afghan people in theatre.

PRT composition and activities exemplify NATO's evolving concept of soft security, and merits further elaboration as a primary example of a contemporary method employed in theater. PRT is structured as a military-civil partnership. Its primary purposes are to facilitate the development of a secure environment in the Afghan regions, including establishing relationships with local authorities; to support, as appropriate, security sector reform activities within its means and capabilities; to facilitate reconstruction efforts; and to provide a tangible demonstration of the commitment of the international community to the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

¹⁰ UN Security Council Resolution No. 1366 (2001).

¹¹ The Challenges Project, "Challenges of Peace Operations: Into the 21st Century-Concluding Report 1997-2002, Executive Summary," (Stockholm: Elanders Gotab, 2002), p.11.

¹² NATO Secretary General's Speech at the Galatasaray University, Istanbul, 29 April 2004.

The European Union, for its part, also has a comprehensive and inclusive soft security policy, based on the understanding that no region is immune to the effects of conflicts.¹³ The EU Security Strategy Document¹⁴ is illuminating in this respect. The EU soft security policies are based on the assumption that “conflicts destroy social and normal infrastructure; encourage criminality; deter investments and make normal economic life impossible.” The EU also finds that key threats are both hard and soft in nature: Terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, failing states and organized crime.

In countering these threats, the EU realizes that the first line of defense is abroad and therefore there is a need to act. The EU aims at dealing with root causes of threats and, thus, focuses its efforts primarily on soft threats. In implementing effective multilateralism, the EU considers utilizing soft security policy instruments in countering soft threats: confidence building measures and arms control regimes; spreading good governance, supporting social and political reforms;¹⁵ dealing with corruption and abuse of power, establishing the rule of law and protecting human rights. To achieve these aims, the EU has been developing and implementing assistance programs.

The EU police missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina (EUPM) and Macedonia (Proxima) are two important soft security missions, which started after NATO’s stabilization efforts (hard security operations) in these two countries had achieved certain goals. The EU missions play a significant role in establishing a stable environment in the region and Turkey has been a net contributor to the EU’s efforts from the beginning.

We also observe that “countering terrorism” entered the EU agenda very swiftly after the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001 and will remain high on the EU priority list.¹⁶

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is the largest regional security organization in the Eurasian-Atlantic space, with 55 participating States, covering an area from Vancouver to Vladivostok. The concept of “cooperative security,” which is based upon the understanding that common security in the context of globalization can only be achieved through increased cooperation between participating states, is yet another notion developed within the fold of the OSCE long ago.

The OSCE instruments in preventive diplomacy are early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, and where these fail, post conflict rehabilitation. Within this framework, the OSCE, through its Field Missions in the Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia carries out important tasks covering all dimensions of security.

The OSCE Strategy to address threats to stability and security in the 21st century, adopted at the OSCE Ministerial meeting in Maastricht on 1-2 December 2003, constitutes a significant step forward in defining the Organization’s response to risks and threats in a changing

¹³ Remarks by Javier Solana at the Conference on Conflict Prevention, Dublin, 31 March 2004.

¹⁴ “A secure Europe in a better World,” European Security Strategy, Brussels, 12 December 2003.

¹⁵ Very similar to one of the declared aims of the Greater Middle East Project that was tabled by the U.S. recently.

¹⁶ “Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on measures to be taken to combat terrorism and other forms of serious crime, in particular to improve exchanges of information.” COM(2004)221 final, Brussels 29.03.2004, p.2.

security environment. This document is a clear reflection of the OSCE's comprehensive approach which addresses soft security issues.

Turkey's Civilian Contributions to International Security

No doubt, the best possible contribution to peace and security is avoiding the outbreak of hostilities in the first place. While cures are generally formulated after the conflict, prevention, even though time consuming, is relatively less laborious. Preventive diplomacy and employing soft security policy instruments are important tools in this respect. However, history is laden with examples of failures of preventive diplomacy, only to be followed by the outbreak of deadly conflicts. In such cases, speed is of essence in decisionmaking. Experience has taught us that delayed action, be it for political or other reasons, can be extremely costly both in terms of human suffering and general devastation. The ability to act quickly often makes the difference between life and death, peace and war. The international system needs to be equipped with the necessary capabilities to react swiftly in the initial phases of any given conflict and impress upon the parties concerned the need to restrain from taking the wrong steps. The role of the UN is central in that regard and should be supported by other international and regional organizations, among which NATO and the EU are the most prominent.

As a country with significant military capabilities and a growing civilian sector that is active in humanitarian efforts, Turkey is a net contributor to international peace and security. In addition to its activities as a member of key international organizations such as the UN and NATO, Turkey also deploys considerable efforts through bilateral contributions.

As one of the founding members of the UN, Turkey has always been committed to upholding the universal goals and principles enshrined in the UN Charter. It has a formidable record in active contributions to the preservation of regional and global peace and stability. Turkey's commitment to international stabilization efforts dates back to the Korean War, where the services of Turkish troops are commemorated to this day. Currently, Turkey takes part in several UN peacekeeping operations. It has participated in numerous operations and missions, notably in Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Georgia, East Timor, North Korea, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

On the other hand, Turkey has not been represented on the Security Council for almost half a century. Therefore, as a country that has been providing considerable support to activities of the United Nations, Turkey wishes to further contribute to the promotion of international peace and security by assuming a seat on the UN Security Council. Turkey has announced its candidature for one of the non-permanent seats allocated to the Western European and Other States Group (WEOG) for the term 2009-2010, for which elections will be held during the 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2008.

In the framework of efforts to enhance the UN's rapid deployment capacity, Turkey joined the UN Standby Arrangements System (UNSAS) and the military "on call list." We indicated our intention to provide a battalion to this System in 1997 and also informed the UN that the Turkish Ministry of Interior would assign an additional contingent of 100 personnel. Turkey also signed the Declaration of Mutual Intent regarding our participation in this System. Turkey has also recently taken steps to become a party to the Convention on the Security of UN Personnel.

As a member of NATO since 1952, Turkey supports NATO missions in a wide geography ranging from the Balkans to Asia. Turkey assumed the leadership of ISAF-II for a period of 8 months. In line with the decision to increase the civilian component of ISAF, which has been a NATO operation since August 2003, Turkey has deployed civilian personnel as well. In this context, Turkish civilian personnel have been deployed for the operation of Kabul International Airport.

I had previously elaborated on NATO's PRT concept. As underlined above, it is an evolving civilian-military cooperation scheme for soft security operations. As part of our ongoing support for Afghanistan, Turkey is currently considering the establishment of a PRT in that country. Should the circumstances warrant deployment of a PRT, it will have a significant civilian component.

Training of personnel is also a vital component of successful missions. Turkey established a Partnership for Peace Training Center¹⁷ (PfP) in Ankara in 1998. The mission of the PfP Training Center is to provide qualitative education and training support to Partner Countries in accordance with NATO and PfP general principles and interoperability objectives. The objectives of the PfP Training Center are to plan and coordinate all PfP training and education activities at strategic, operational-tactical, tactical-technical levels and provide language training. In accordance with NATO's transformation process, Turkey also declared its readiness to establish three Centers of Excellence, among which there will also be a Center of Excellence on Combating Terrorism. All three centers will provide training for NATO and Partner Countries. These Centers would also support NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue, which NATO will enhance at the upcoming Istanbul Summit.

With regard to EU-led operations, Turkey participated in Operation Concordia in Macedonia, which lasted from 31 March, until 15 December 2003 with 11 personnel; its contribution continues in the follow-up civilian crisis management operation "Proxima," with 7 personnel; and 14 police officers currently participating in the EU Police Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which has been operating since 1 January 2003.

Turkey is determined to continue to play an active part, as has been the case so far, in EU-led civilian and military crisis management operations. Turkey's participation in a possible future EU-led operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina following the termination of SFOR will constitute another example of its deepening cooperation with the EU in the realm of crisis response operations.

As for the OSCE, Turkey contributes to the operations of this Organization in Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro and Georgia with 34 civilian personnel.

Conclusion

In the aftermath of the Cold War, Turkey's security responsibilities have considerably increased, as have its security concerns. Accordingly, with a view to fulfilling its responsibilities and standing up to the challenges of our times, Turkey has significantly broadened its contributions, both in hard and soft terms, in a vast geography ranging from the Balkans to Afghanistan.

¹⁷ For more information visit <http://www.bioem.tsk.mil.tr>.

Contrary to initial and premature arguments leveled by some circles that Turkey's geo-strategic relevance would diminish, Turkey has found itself at the epicenter of international security issues. The ethnically motivated conflicts of the 1990's in the Balkans, as well as both Gulf crises had direct implications for Turkey, which in turn, constructively cooperated with relevant security organizations and third parties, in order to re-institute peace and stability.

The proactive approach required to deal with security issues, as well as the horrible spectre of terrorism, present new obligations and duties for every responsible member of the international community. Turkey has been a net contributor to efforts in this vein within the UN, NATO, the EU, and the OSCE and will continue to do so within its means and capabilities.

These are indeed testing times in which the role of international organizations is becoming more critical in maintaining international peace and security. The challenges we face today are diverse, as are the methods that need to be employed in dealing with them. Along with international organizations such as the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, NATO and the European Union are of particular importance. The year 2004 will be recorded in history books as an important milestone for both NATO and the EU, as they have both enlarged their membership. Likewise, for NATO, 2004 will also be highlighted by the upcoming NATO Summit which Turkey will have the honor of hosting in Istanbul on 28-29 June 2004. The Istanbul Summit will be an invaluable opportunity to reaffirm Alliance cohesion and solidarity. As a Summit in which historic decisions are expected to be made, Istanbul will also serve as a venue in which a common understanding regarding the soft and hard security threats within the Euro-Atlantic area will once again be confirmed.