

*Summary of Discussions*SWP/SSI Working Group  
**"Divergent Perspectives on Military Transformation"****SWP**1st Colloquium, Berlin, December 2-3, 2004  
at Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik

The following is a brief summary of the discussions of the meeting of the working group on December 3, 2004. The meeting was attended by participants from government, academic and military institutions from the U.S., France, Sweden, the UK, the Netherlands and Germany. The presentations from the meeting, also available at [www.tfpd.org](http://www.tfpd.org), should be viewed in conjunction with this summary in order to understand these remarks in their proper context.

**The Future Conflict Environment and its Implications for Defense Transformation**

There are a wide range of potential future conflict environments upon which both the U.S. and Europe can agree. These include, in particular, conflicts environments that encompass the threat posed by asymmetric, ambiguous, cross-culture conflicts, i.e. terrorism and “adaptive opponents.” It is the points of contention, both within the U.S. and between the U.S. and Europe that require that bulk of attention and some sort of combined or joint analysis in order to address them appropriately. In the U.S., there is no consensus as to the potential threat posed by the reemergence of “Great Powers” such as China, Russia and India. In addition, there is widespread disagreement about the importance of traditional alliances, such as NATO, and whether they are being or should be replaced by issue specific coalitions. Beyond these more “obvious” threats lie the risks posed by unrest or crises related to shortages of natural resources, such as oil, food or water. Similar views and debates are taking place in Europe where even more attention is given to the risks posed by globalization, which is putting a heavy toll on many societies and ultimately pushing people in extreme directions.

In the past, strategic analysis has often assumed that enemies would remain static. Today, however, enemies are rapidly transforming themselves and are capable of responding to whatever attempts are made to stop them. This does not render planning for the future obsolete because it helps to develop a certain mental agility and process for thinking about the future that can help an organization quickly adjust to the changing security environment. Ultimately, this thinking must lead to a purposive diversity of solutions to address diversity of situations. Accordingly, there will have to be a modular hybrid force with different types of units that can respond to the diverse situations.

The assessment of future threats and responses thereto, will have a direct impact on today’s [continued] investments in military transformation. The key is to make sure that those investments are directed, based on the proper risk assessments, at things that militaries *should* do as opposed to things that they *can* do. Three key questions are: (1) How valuable will technological solutions continue to be? (2) Have we reached the threshold of its utility? And (3) Have we maximized the potential for the substitution of technology for manpower (particularly in the context of urban warfare which by its nature is more labor than capital intensive)? The U.S. reliance on money/technology is an

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ingrained part of U.S. culture – its ambitions and dreams have historically exceeded the amount of labor available and this has evolved into a cultural extinct to use money and technology as a substitute for labor. This reliance on money and technology, especially by the military, is likely to be curtailed in the future as the baby boomer generation ages and expresses more reservations about continuing to pour money into the military.

In the UK, transformation has a variety of meanings but it is more a political term than a military term. The UK approach is that it wants to fight with, not as, the U.S. But to have political cooperability, you must have technical interoperability. The UK is pursuing network-enabled capability (NEC) – the UK version of network centric warfare (NCW). This essentially means using technology to enable current functions rather than, as in the U.S., developing a future doctrine or a future type of warfare based on technological advances. NEC is regarded as evolutionary rather than revolutionary for reasons of affordability and risk management.

Europe as a whole, primarily for financial, strategic and ultimately political reasons, will generally not be able to match the depth and breadth of U.S. transformation efforts, so its militaries will be relegated to either a complementary or specialized role in joint operations with the U.S. Europe will rely more on non-military means to implement its strategic goals. It tends to prefer the term ‘security transformation’ that perceives military issues as just one element of power in a set of tools for comprehensive peacemaking. This view is, at least in theory, shared by the U.S. but the problem is that will be rather difficult to carry out the equivalent transformation of the State Department and other governmental entities because they lack the financial, human and intellectual resources.

**NCW as a guiding principle? Lessons learned from recent operations**

A network centric military, as exemplified by the recent operations of the new medium-weight Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) of the US Army in Iraq, represents changes in the physical domain and the technology domain. The ability to network land, air and sea operations—so that everyone is operating with the same information/has a shared situational awareness—greatly enhances the military’s ability to “see first, understand first, attack first and finish decisively.” A view held by the US Department of Defense is that the costs of network-enabling military units are such that that interoperability can be afforded by almost any military, or combination of militaries, in NATO. Moreover, because technology enhanced brigades are more flexible, useful and effective, you obviate the high costs of keeping “ready” units that cannot contribute to the fight.

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The EU member states are increasingly reluctant to use force outside of the international system and war tends to become effectively obsolete as a policy instrument. In recent years, most of Europe's deployments focused on stabilization operations rather than on high-intensity combat. This has resulted in Europe's developing a "zero casualty" culture, similar to the culture that prevails in the U.S. The U.S., however, in contrast to Europe, in its global war on terrorism tends to accept more combat casualties.

The European political will to restructure and transform its forces is therefore quite limited. The money is there but it can only be made available if European militaries make politically painful decisions, i.e. abandoning conscription, suspend procurement of legacy weapon systems or combining forces into a European defense force. Neither of these options will happen in the near future, but if Europe really wants to transform, there is no choice. For the time being, Europe should focus on having network enabled operations Command Control Computers Communications Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (C<sup>4</sup>ISR) that are interoperable with the U.S. and other allies.

**Force Structure and Stability and Support Operations**

In the wake of Operation Iraqi Freedom there have been numerous calls for adapting force structures to be better able to cope with low-intensity conflicts. Prominent voices in both the US and Europe propose creating specialized structures, e.g. constabulary forces, for this purpose. The popular call for constabulary forces to perform the prerequisite for nation-building, however, seems to ignore the fact that such forces may be an integral part of performing these tasks, but the military, administrative support, NGOs and much more are also required. Stabilization is much more than law enforcement work and includes observation, monitoring of settlements, enforcement of sanctions, establishing and protecting safe havens and guaranteeing or denying freedom of movement.

In Germany for example, building a constabulary force means that other forces would have to be demobilized. Because there is not enough money or labor to support such an endeavor Germany will not pursue it independently. However, Germany has no objection to the creation of a European Gendarmerie Force which would be built upon the expertise and forces existing in France, Spain or Italy.

U.S. stabilization capabilities, particularly in the form of constabulary units, either do not exist or are underdeveloped. These hybrid organizations could be very useful to address situations, such as in Iraq, where you need a mix of law enforcement and military operations. The U.S. will not create specialized units (which would in turn require separate doctrine, training, etc.) for Stability and Support operations but will add instead more specialists in its existing active force. The U.S. "force of the future" could include a component that is fully "transformed" through which all of the activity duty troops rotate.

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Until the U.S. does develop the proper tools to perform stabilization tasks, it will continue to rely on Europe and the UN to carry out stabilization operations. In this context, if the U.S. leaves stability operations to the EU, is the U.S. prepared to let the EU set the political terms of the operations?

**Transformation Concepts for Coalition Operations**

NCW enables how we can fight, but it does not drive how we want to fight. With most current IT you can combine everything in order to make it network centric, but political cooperation and current policy, not technology, inhibit information sharing. "Joint operations" means more than bringing armed forces from different nations together, but also includes, as repeatedly emphasized in Europe, NGOs and other similar actors. The MIP (the Multilateral Interoperability Program) is a central pillar for making progress towards enhancing the interoperability of coalition partners. However, within Europe, legal and cultural barriers make cooperation within Europe more difficult than cooperation with the U.S.