

Cyber jaw, not war

The cyber domain has brought great opportunities but also great vulnerabilities. Countries differ in their response, with some wanting a hard line and others resisting, so increasingly we will see 'cyber diplomacy' brought to bear on the issue

By Joseph Nye,
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of Power*

Until recently, the issue of cyber security has largely been the domain of specialists. When the internet was created 40 years ago, this small community was like a virtual village of people who knew each other, and they designed a system with little attention to security. Even the commercial web is only two decades old, but it has exploded from 16 million users in 1995 to 1.7 billion users today.

This burgeoning interdependence has created great opportunities and great vulnerabilities. Security experts wrestling with cyber issues are at about the same stage in understanding the implications of this new technology as nuclear experts were in the early years after the first nuclear explosions. 'Cyber diplomacy' is in its infancy.

The cyber domain is a volatile human-made environment. As an advisory panel of defence scientists explained, "people built all the pieces", but "the cyber universe is complex well beyond anyone's understanding and exhibits behaviour that no one predicted, and sometimes can't even be explained well". Unlike atoms, human adversaries are purposeful and intelligent. Mountains and oceans are hard to move, but portions of cyberspace can be turned on and off at the click of a mouse. It is cheaper and quicker to move electrons across the globe than to move large ships long distances through the friction of salt water. The costs of developing multiple-carrier task forces and submarine fleets create enormous barriers to entry and make it possible to speak of American naval dominance. In contrast, the barriers to entry in the cyber domain are so low that non-state actors and small states can play significant roles at low levels of cost.

In my book *The Future of Power*, I describe the diffusion of power away from governments as one of the great power shifts in this century. Cyberspace is a perfect example of a broader trend. The largest powers are unlikely to be able to dominate this domain as much as they have others such as sea, air or space. While they have greater resources, they also have greater vulnerabilities, and, at this stage in the development of the technology, offence dominates defence in cyberspace.

The United States, Russia, Britain, France and China have greater capacity than other state and non-state actors, but it makes little sense to speak of dominance in cyberspace. If anything, dependence on complex cyber systems for support of military and economic activities creates new vulnerabilities in large states that can be exploited by non-state actors.

There is much loose talk about 'cyber war'. But if the term is restricted to cyber actions that have effects outside cyberspace that amplify or are equivalent to physical violence, the world is only just beginning to

glimpse cyber war – for instance, in the denial-of-service attacks that accompanied the conventional war in Georgia in 2008, or the recent sabotage of Iranian centrifuges by the Stuxnet worm.

If hacktivism is mostly considered a nuisance, there are four major categories of cyber threats to national security, each with a different time horizon and with different (in principle) solutions: cyber war and economic espionage are largely associated with states, and cyber crime and cyber terrorism are mostly associated with non-state actors. For the US, at present, the highest costs come from espionage and crime, but over the next decade or so, war and terrorism may become greater threats. Moreover, as alliances and tactics evolve among different actors, the categories may increasingly overlap.

As the former US director of national intelligence Mike McConnell said, "Sooner or later, terror groups will achieve cyber sophistication. It's like nuclear proliferation, only far easier." At this stage, however, according to President Barack Obama's 2009 cyber review, theft of intellectual property by other states (and corporations) is the highest immediate cost. Not only does it result in current economic losses, but by destroying competitive advantage, it also jeopardises future hard power.

Security experts are far from certain what terms such as offence, defence, deterrence or the laws of war mean in the cyber realm. Public understanding lags even further behind. At this stage, large-scale formal treaties regulating cyberspace seem unlikely. Over the past decade, the United Nations General Assembly has passed a series of resolutions condemning criminal activity and drawing attention to defensive measures that governments can take. For more than a decade, Russia has sought a treaty for broader international oversight of the internet, banning deception or the embedding of malicious code or circuitry that could be activated in the event of war. But Americans have argued that measures banning offence can damage defence against current attacks, and would be impossible to verify or enforce. Moreover, the US has resisted agreements that could legitimise authoritarian governments' censorship of the internet. Nonetheless, the US has begun informal discussions with Russia, and the Obama administration has indicated a willingness to broaden international cyber consultations.

Even advocates for an international law for information operations are sceptical of a multilateral treaty akin to the Geneva Conventions that could contain precise and detailed rules given future technological volatility. But they argue that like-minded states could announce self-governing rules that could form norms for the future. We are in the early stages of an era in which the diplomacy of cyber security will become a major issue. ♦

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VIKING research on information security in electricity grids



By Gitte Bergknut and Rita Lenander,
VIKING Project Consortium

Smart grid is a new word with new technology in an old infrastructure. The Smart Grid functions will provide many possibilities that will improve both the customer benefit and optimisation of operation of the grid. At the same time, some of those functions will increase the vulnerability and risk towards the reliability of the grid and the privacy of the customer.

It is important to mitigate the cyber-security issues at an early stage and involve security experts both from information security and power-system security. To ensure that the information security perspective is incorporated by design, implemented and maintained including both important security processes and proactive mitigations.

Another area that needs to be addressed is responsibilities and security review. The concept of smart grid will include an increased number of interested organisations – ie the national grid TSO, owner of the grids, the owners of production facilities both large- and small-scale, the customers, third-party vendors of smart products for keeping track and control of electricity usage, subcontractors, control-system vendors, and perhaps even consumer products. On top of all those directly involved is the

national interest of a stable and reliable distribution of electricity. The societal cost of power disruption is significant, measured both in loss of national production and human quality of life.

The grid is operated via Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems that have a long lifetime. Most SCADA systems used today were not built for an open technical environment with multiple connections and publicly known protocols for data transfer. The concepts and designs of smart grid use standard IT products and standard protocols such as IP (internet protocol). Those SCADA systems are built for a standalone environment separated from other networks. In a standalone environment there is less need for logical security functions if the operating center is physically protected. The smart grid requires many network connections, and completely new interfaces will occur such as the digital interfaces of a smart meter or customer products for providing information regarding real-time energy consumption and statistics.

The communication will be duplex, meaning that the data will flow in both directions between the end-point and the central SCADA system. New functionality will be introduced, such as disconnection of household, hourly measurements of meters and local energy production data necessary to the central SCADA system for dispatching and balancing the grid – all these require a high information-security level.



There is a clear trend in the world towards more sophisticated and targeted threats using ordinary IT security breaches to attack SCADA systems. The first example of a specially designed attack towards SCADA system was Stuxnet, which appeared in 2010. The effects of Stuxnet are not confirmed, but the design indicates that the purpose was to cause physical damage. Utilities and owners of other critical infrastructure are likely to be a target for new threats in the future, and the probability and consequences of such an attack in a smart grid concept will be high.

VIKING is an EU seventh framework programme financed research project (Vital Infrastructure, networkS, INformation and control systems manaGement), with participants from both universities and industries in Europe. The aim of the project is to develop methodologies for analysis, design and operation of resilient, secure industrial control systems for power transmission and distribution. This is achieved by creating different models.

One mathematical cyber-physical model of the power grid and one logical model of the SCADA system and IT network architecture. The latter model is described with attack and defense graphs. The societal model is calculating the societal cost using an artificial society based on statistics from Eurostat. All those models are interconnected in a test bed consisting of an actual SCADA system including physical devices such as PLC, as

well as virtualised simulators. The researchers from the universities have proved that cyber-attack can cause physical damage of the grid and that the current bad data-detection systems can be deceived.

At the moment, work is going on within the project to develop a tool for calculating the risk of a successful attack and find the most effective way to increase the security level in the system and network architecture. The project will also propose other available mitigations that can be applied to increase the level of security for the benefit of both the involved infrastructure owners, consumers and society.

It is important to collaborate with other research project in this area and closely related subjects. We see the benefits of international and interdisciplinary research and we encourage further research of security issues related to critical infrastructure.

Due to the number of organisations likely to be involved, the project has identified the importance to implement a common base level of information security to ensure the reliability, security and privacy in the electricity grid infrastructure.



What next after Libya?

The world is growing increasingly uncertain and dangerous, yet all countries are spending less on defence. So we need to consider what critical military capabilities are needed, how they will be provided and how much to intervene in a crisis

By Geoff Hoon,
former minister
of defence,
United Kingdom

The nature of the debate over operations in Libya was understandably short-term. Given the pressure on Benghazi and the physical threat to those looking for reform, it was not surprising that Britain and France were concerned about the immediate consequences of not acting. Inaction would have condemned the Libyan reformers to almost immediate defeat, with the prospect of the world having to deal with a victorious Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. The wider reform movement in the Arab world would have been stopped in its tracks.

At Deauville, G8 leaders will consider the strategic implications of recent events, economically and politically. It might be sensible to consider some military lessons as well.

Once difficult political decisions have been taken, questions about what military capabilities are available to deliver those decisions can sometimes seem secondary. There is an implicit assumption that it will always be

possible to take military action to carry through the consequences of political decisions. Military leaders sometimes contribute to this state of mind with their 'can do' attitude. It is, of course, possible to fly strike aircraft from Britain to patrol the skies over Libya – but is it ideal to have to refuel them twice on the way? Congratulating the crews for their ability to conduct such complex operations so successfully should not result in our overlooking the fact that such skill was necessary because previous generations had decided to dispense with long-range strike aircraft in Europe.

What kind of military capabilities will be necessary to deal with the next international crisis? No one knows – because no one knows where that next crisis will occur. In an increasingly uncertain world, what are the critical military capabilities that will be required, and how will they be provided? As all countries, including the United States, restrain government spending, involving significant



Aircraft launching from a US Navy carrier in the Red Sea. Today's world needs highly mobile and flexible defence forces, ready to react to threats wherever they occur

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Advanced technology gives the US the edge in war fighting, but does that mean only the US will in future decide which wars to fight?

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cuts in defence expenditures, what are the consequences for states' future ability to take action?

For defence policymakers and their political leaders, the Cold War was fairly predictable. The Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact were slow-moving, visible institutions that would take time to mount an attack against the West. Any threatening build-up could be matched by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), as forces gathered on either side of the inner German border. Such a potential confrontation could be prepared for. Although there was an arms race, what was being developed was designed to fit into a previously agreed plan, building on or updating an existing capability. There was a known threat.

Significant demands

When the Cold War ended, there was a widespread assumption that the world would become a much safer place. Most Western countries made deep cuts in defence budgets as a 'peace dividend'. While the world no longer faced the threat of mutually assured nuclear destruction, the West has since had to respond to a series of unforeseen events. No one foresaw the collapse of the Soviet Union. Almost overnight, countries on both sides of the divide were left with military equipment and capabilities designed for a conflict that had disappeared. Many are still dealing with the consequences in terms of static force structures and equipment designed for a different job. Few countries have the luxury of being able to abandon such programmes when so much money has been spent or committed.

This is not least the case when there have been significant demands on armed forces. These conflicts have not had a single cause. The disintegration of Yugoslavia tied up NATO forces on two operations. Military action in Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and East Timor could be said to have been colonial legacies. Afghanistan and the war against terror were the direct consequence of 9/11, and Iraq was an indirect consequence of this instability.

No one predicted, and planned for, the consequences of the suicide of a flower seller in a Tunisian marketplace, leading to a reform movement across the Arab world. One unforeseen consequence was a half-finished revolution in Libya that left the incumbent dictator with military assets and, unlike in neighbouring Egypt, the will to use them against protesting civilians.

Is it possible to prepare for such unpredictable threats? It is foreseeable that the West is increasingly likely to become involved in such events. The only common factor in recent international crises is the power of the media to bring events from around the world into the homes of western voters. The urge that 'something must be done' is very powerful, providing that what needs to be done can be accomplished quickly. The technology available to the US in Afghanistan and Iraq destroyed the conventional resistance with awesome speed, but in each case the aftermath showed that winning the war is straightforward compared with winning the peace.

With the cumulative effect of years of defence cuts, peacekeeping operations from the Balkans onward have strained both the military and the political resolve of the West. There was near unanimity that al Qaeda and the Taliban had to be dealt with after the events of 9/11. Polls showed overwhelming support for military intervention, but it melted away in the face of persistent casualties in a long, drawn-out conflict.

Floating bases

Yet sudden withdrawal is not an attractive political option if it leaves the country in question in no better position than it was at the time of the initial intervention. That is the issue in Libya. Once a no-fly zone has been agreed upon, how can the conclusion of the mission be determined before the threat to Libyans on the ground no longer exists? That conclusion can ultimately only mean the removal of Gaddafi, even if it cannot be stated officially.

The necessary military capabilities depend on factors peculiar to the particular region or country involved. Strike aircraft can be moved closer to Libya, providing countries such as Italy and Cyprus agree. Carriers can patrol the Mediterranean as floating bases, so aircraft can be flown off them. Other required military assets can be made available from those countries willing to be involved.

Previously, defence planners would have tried to anticipate impending threats and then have organised force structures and equipment accordingly. Recent unforeseen conflicts have shown that, instead, highly mobile and flexible forces, capable of dealing with whatever threat might arise wherever it originates, are needed.

Defence cuts since the end of the Cold War mean that no one country, with the possible exception of the US, has the full capacity needed to conduct the range of possible military actions. European force structures have been pared to the bone. Pooling military capabilities through NATO or the European Union is one possible solution, but the opposition of Germany to the action in Libya shows the political limits of this approach.

There is a risk of having to deal with an increasingly uncertain and dangerous world with less and less military capability. The pressure to intervene in crises in more and more countries grows, despite declining military capabilities to do the job. Technology gives the US the decisive edge in war fighting, but does that mean that only the US will decide which wars to fight? Peacekeeping is becoming more difficult than fighting; are the resources required to finish the job available? It may help to pool military capabilities, providing there is clear political agreement about use.

But the real answer to the problem of global uncertainty is either to intervene less or – preferably – to spend more on defence. ♦

Good governance after the Arab Spring

Although there is little consensus on the origins and desirability of the protests in the Arab world, the G8 and G20 leaders can take concrete steps towards stability in the region by helping to equip the rising generation of leaders to govern

By Christopher Sands, senior fellow, Hudson Institute

As the G8 leaders prepare to meet in Deauville, recent events in the Arab world will continue to command attention. The democratic protests that began in Tunisia and led to the exile of Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali inspired imitators across the region. In Egypt, the protesters at Tahrir Square forced the resignation of Hosni Mubarak. Demonstrations in Bahrain, Jordan, Syria and Yemen prompted governments

to promise reforms, but popular demands for political reform continue to raise questions about the future of governments and leaders in these countries, the ongoing economic costs of political instability and the future of democracy in the Arab world.

Part of this wave of popular protest, but also apart from it, was the uprising in Libya against Muammar Gaddafi. His security forces reacted with violence, and the protesters took up arms. Violence escalated, prompting G8



Anti-government protesters in Bahrain. The unrest that started in Tunisia spread to several other countries in the Middle East and North Africa



members Britain, France, Canada and the United States to engage the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in military action to back the rebels. Italy lent its airbases to NATO allies and participated in the enforcement of the no-fly zone over its former colonial possession. G20 member Turkey joined in policing the arms embargo imposed against Libya in an attempt to limit the escalation of fighting. Britain's David Cameron, France's Nicolas Sarkozy and the US's Barack Obama called for Gaddafi to relinquish power and let the rebels form a new government.

Not all the G8 and G20 countries look favourably on these protests, however. G20 member Saudi Arabia – thus far spared the massive street protests seen in other Arab countries – has nonetheless been affected by instability in Bahrain and Yemen, and by changes in longtime allies such as Egypt. Much of Turkey, with its Sunni Muslim majority population and close historic ties to the Arab world, was once governed by the Ottoman Empire, and cannot be sanguine about the uncertainty facing the region.

In China, the state media noted the protests at Tahrir Square critically, avoiding the inevitable comparisons with the protests at Tiananmen Square. The decision of Western countries to intervene on the side of the protesters in Libya sets a disturbing precedent for Beijing, even after United Nations support was secured to legitimate the intervention. However, perhaps the most difficult issue for China is the question of democracy in formerly authoritarian countries across the Arab world.

The extent to which countries in the Arab world adopt democratic values will certainly vary. It must be the choice of the local population in order to be legitimate. Absent a broader consensus, G8 and G20 leaders should agree to support the governments that emerge in ways that promote stability, respect for basic rights and a return to economic health. Several concrete steps would contribute to these goals as the Arab spring moves into midsummer.

- Establish personal contacts with new leaders. Most of the countries where protesters may form governments have blocked western democracy assistance, or severely restricted it. Non-governmental trainers from the US, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands and other countries have helped to forge close personal ties among democracy activists around the world that have created trust and conveyed skills to prepare them for elections and governing. This preparation is absent in Egypt and Libya. A remedial effort will be necessary to establish contact and trust with new leaders.
- Emphasise governing skills and capacity building. In Central and Eastern Europe, pro-democracy activists were swept into office by voters, only to be voted out at the first opportunity when they failed to deliver a better life for citizens. One reason was inexperience: those allied with the former authoritarian regime were more competent at running a government, a challenge that is more complex than organising a protest campaign. New leaders will need to master fiscal and monetary policy, promote stability and economic growth, and foster the development of a civil society. Drafting a constitution, developing a national budget, organising a legislature, forming a cabinet, providing civilian oversight to the military and security forces in a post-conflict environment are all tasks that can be performed more capably with the benefit of the experience of foreign peers. Exchanges and peer-to-peer mentoring can help new leaders appreciably, and G8 governments have much to share. G20 governments formed after sudden, democratic openings such as Indonesia and South Africa have a generation of leaders who negotiated this difficult transition and might be deployed to help. Other G20 countries with relatively gradual, peaceful transitions to democracy, such as Brazil, Argentina and Mexico, have valuable experiences to share as well.

- Be attentive to the opposition. The leaders who emerge from these societies include those who form new governments as well as the responsible opposition. Authoritarian regimes foster an expectation of “winners take all”, with the result that those who lose elections are tempted to take up arms, or to otherwise destabilise and delegitimise the new government. Responsible opposition leaders and parties are committed to competing for power according to the rule of law and demonstrate that commitment by eschewing violence. The international community, by reaching out to opposition leaders and parties, can avoid taking sides in the nascent democratic politics and also ensure that future alternation in power among new leaders occurs without a crisis.
- Set parameters for political change by engagement and insistence on the rule of law. The G8 and G20 have tremendous influence by virtue of being leaders in the global economy. This influence should be exerted on the side of adherence to human rights norms, democratic best practices for free and fair elections and transparency, and a non-violent contestation for power.

Firm stance

Parties that serve as fronts for militia groups must be excluded from international support unless they give up their arms. New governments that deploy the power of the state against the opposition or segments of the population must similarly immediately lose foreign support, including democracy assistance and development aid. Parties and individuals who seek to restore authoritarianism in one form or another must be treated as antidemocratic and denied international support as well. The firm stance of the G8 and G20 against violence as a means to achieve political ends will set the bounds of political contestation for power in countries where historical experience and tradition have not established such parameters, and will be necessary until democratic norms have taken root.

There is no consensus among either the G8 or the G20 members on the origins and the desirability of the protests in the Arab world. They are clearly divided on the appropriateness of intervention in Libya in particular. Going forward, however, they should seek a unified position on concrete steps to foster peace and stability in this region by establishing contact with the rising generation of leaders, helping them to obtain the skills of governing and improving their capacity to do so – including in opposition – and setting the outer bounds of legitimate contestation for power. A consensus on good government among the G8 leaders at Deauville, or later among the G20 leaders at the Cannes Summit, will promote the return of these countries to contributing to the global economy, and will benefit everyone. ♦

“Parties that serve as fronts for militia groups must be excluded from international support unless they give up their arms”

Global security and the Korean peninsula

With current problems in North Korea likely to threaten global security, the G8 and G20 need to take a stronger stance. They should go beyond ex post facto responses to diverse security threats and take the measures needed for prevention

By Lee Dong-hwi, Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Republic of Korea

The most noticeable change observed during the G20 Seoul Summit in November 2010 was the clear shift in global economic and political power from advanced countries to newly emerging countries. This shift will, over the medium to long term, call for a realignment of the international order. Consequently, efforts to build a new form of global governance will be further accelerated.

As exemplified by the progress of the G20, the frequent emergence and deepening of global crises have gradually shed light on the complementary and converging relationship between universal multilateralism and the Gx formula. The general tendency now is to broaden the foundations of the Gx approach to legitimacy while preserving its efficiency.

Doing so will increase the impetus for creating a new global governance that more clearly establishes



Models of a North Korean Scud-B missile and South Korean Hawk surface-to-air missiles on display at the Korean War Memorial Museum in Seoul

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North Korea possibly believed that nuclear development would give it a military edge over the South

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correlations between the Gx system and a number of international institutions, such as the United Nations.

The dangers and opportunities that the Korean peninsula question involves are likely to pose major challenges to that new form of global governance.

First of all, a possible conflict on the Korean peninsula may lead to military and security perils that end up involving not only north-east Asian countries, but also major powers around the world because of the peninsula's geopolitical location, the heavy military confrontation along the demilitarised zone and North Korea's nuclear capability. Second, it will have ramifications for the economic security of some of the world's major economies, such as the United States, China, Japan, Russia and Korea, owing to their geo-economic interdependence. Third, the severe low-growth problems that have long plagued North Korea will trigger various issues of human security if there is a crisis on the Korean peninsula.

North Korea's ongoing nuclear development, a matter of key interest for the international community, has already touched off a few crises and will generate more. The first one occurred in the early 1990s, when North Korea raised the nuclear issue in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the early 2000s, Pyongyang declared its possession of nuclear weapons, triggering the second nuclear crisis. It was the North's way of coping with the hardened foreign policy of the US in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The uranium enrichment issue, which has resurfaced while the Six-Party Talks remain stalled, is paving the way for a third nuclear crisis.

The situation today is decidedly more complex. It is a departure from past cycles of North Korea causing trouble

and other countries seeking diplomatic solutions, with the primary examples being the Agreed Framework signed between the United States and North Korea in Geneva in 1994 and the Joint Six-Party Statement of 19 September 2005. There are several explanations for this new pattern. China's position as a new power is profoundly changing the international strategic environment. In addition, the health of Kim Jong-il is deteriorating. These circumstances alone render change in North Korea inevitable.

In addition, however, the two instances of North Korea's provocation of the South in 2010 – first in the sinking of the *Cheonan* in March and then the bombardment of Yeonpyeong in November – underline once again that a peaceful resolution of Korean peninsula issues is by no means an easy task. North Korea's actions may have been caused by overconfidence as a result of advances in its nuclear development programmes. They may have also been manifestations of restlessness to win the immediate attention of the international community.

Irrespective of the causes, North Korea's continued nuclear development and consecutive acts of provocation are probably driven by three policy calculations, all aimed at preserving the regime. First, the North Korean leadership likely concluded that military tension would strengthen its domestic control, a crucial element for retaining a political position that puts the military first. Second, the North possibly believed that nuclear development would give it a military edge over the South and thus help North Korea shape inter-Korean relations in a way that is advantageous to itself. Third, Pyongyang probably expected that a tighter grip on the domestic front and an advantage over the South would further solidify the power transition, which is progressing rapidly.

New realities, new challenges

As it pursues such policies, North Korea expects tacit approval from rising China, whose growing prominence has become even more undeniable since the global financial crisis of 2008. Yet military-first politics will continue to exacerbate North Korea's economic difficulties, and international criticism of the North's nuclear development will further isolate the country. To make matters worse, should the new and old factions start to part ways and fissures between the two sides deepen into conflict within North Korea once the transition of power reaches a certain point, China may no longer view North Korea as a strategic asset but, rather, as a strategic burden.

Should such a situation develop, and should worsening economic difficulties and possible nuclear proliferation combine with North Korea's inability to exercise political control, the country would face extreme uncertainty and fluidity. Accordingly, this situation will threaten the peace and stability not only of the Korean peninsula but of the whole region and, indeed, the world.

The G8 has served as a forum for gathering the political will of the world's leaders to seek peaceful resolutions of key conflicts around the world. Through the Global Partnership against Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, it has continued to reduce the dangers of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism. In 2010, in particular, the G8 successfully sought an international consensus on the *Cheonan* incident by issuing a harsh statement denouncing the North. By doing so, the G8 reaffirmed the crucial role it plays in the security realm. The North Korean problem, which includes the nuclear issue, will very likely pose a global security challenge.

Hence, the various global governance mechanisms now being newly streamlined through both the G8 and the G20 should go beyond ex post facto responses to diverse security threats. They should take a step further and reinforce their role by taking the necessary measures for prevention. ♦



Tackling cocaine and corruption

Drug trafficking is one of the big activities of criminal groups and causes corruption and violence. Producer and transit countries face consumption problems, and these will be a target for the G8 leaders in Deauville



By Amandine Scherrer, associate researcher, Canada Research Chair in Security, Identity and Technology, University of Montreal

Cocaine packs being seized on the Bolivia-Colombia border



Transatlantic cocaine trafficking is one of the top security priorities of the 2011 G8 French presidency. Drug trafficking contributes to the destabilisation of states owing to the infiltration of laundered money into economies, the corruption it generates and the violence caused by rival criminal groups seeking to corner markets. Local consumption – in producer, transit and final destination countries – will likely be a subsequent target of the G8 leaders when they meet at Deauville.

According to the 2010 *World Drug Report* published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC), new trends have emerged in the cocaine market. Despite having been a recreational drug for decades, and despite demand waning in its largest markets (mainly in the United Kingdom and North America), cocaine has gained popularity in an ever widening range of countries.

Other changes concern the diversification in producing countries (notably newcomers Brazil, Venezuela and Ecuador versus the traditional Columbia, Bolivia and Peru) and the routes used for trafficking (with West Africa a new key trans-shipment hub to Europe). Decades of criminological studies have shown that drug trafficking clearly constitutes one of the major activities of criminal groups and generates corruption, rivalry and competition and, often, violence.

Cocaine trafficking is certainly not a new security threat, as often suggested. The coca leaf has been chewed in Latin America for more than a thousand years. Cocaine trafficking dates back to the beginning of the 20th century, as a result of prohibition laws adopted at domestic and international levels. The Hague Convention of 1912 can be considered as the starting point of a global prohibition regime, followed by the UN conventions on narcotics (1961) and illicit trafficking in narcotics and psychotropic substances (1988). The ‘war on drugs’ launched by the United States during the 1970s and the ‘80s has expanded and intensified international activities in the field.

Best practices

As drug trafficking has become progressively associated with organised crime and money laundering, bodies such as UNODC, Interpol and the Financial Action Task Force have implemented various programmes and action plans. The multilateral adoption of best practices, guiding principles and recommendations have shaped the current anti-drugs regime. Thus, despite new trends, the markets and trafficking routes are well established and well investigated by law enforcement and custom agencies. But how well are international organisations responding?

The failure of the war on drugs and its echoes on the international stage have been widely documented. In particular, several inconsistencies and limits have been highlighted at the domestic level (the stigmatisation of ethnic minorities and their overrepresentation in prisons, the explosion in prisoner numbers) and abroad (the devastating effects the US anti-drug policy in Colombia or Panama). Most of the studies underline how this

“Cocaine has gained popularity in an ever-widening range of countries”

“The coca leaf has been chewed in Latin America for more than a thousand years”

so-called war has relegated certain population groups to the margins of US society, how it has been used to justify an aggressive foreign policy that disregards social, legal and political specificities, and how it has marginalised certain producing countries that cannot produce some of these substances legally within the international community. As pointed out by many experts, international prohibition regimes too often focus attention on the countries supplying the western markets with heroin, cocaine and marijuana, and carefully avoid discussing the causes of domestic drug use.

In addition, organised criminal groups have shown their shortcomings. Linking the fight against the drug cartels and the consequences in the cocaine market can be counterproductive, says the *World Drug Report*, because “break-ups of big cocaine cartels may lead to the emergence of a larger number of smaller groups”.

Health-related issues

However, many studies have shown that treatment is an effective investment to reduce drug demand, including demand for cocaine. According to the same UNODC report, the significant decline in cocaine use in the United States over the past three decades can be connected to increased spending on prevention and treatment. Some of the highly criticised and polemical aspects of the anti-drug policies in the 1980s and the ‘90s have been balanced by programmes aimed at adopting an integrated strategy to counter the world drug problem, not only by tackling trafficking and its roots, but also by dealing with the demand side and its subsequent health-related issues.

In 2003, the last time France hosted the G8, the G8 sponsored the Paris Ministerial Conference on Drug Routes from Central Asia to Europe. More than 50 countries and international organisations subscribed to the principle of shared responsibility in the fight against opium and heroin trafficking from Afghanistan. What has become known as the Paris Pact has been since implemented by the UNODC. It promotes an exchange of information on opiate trafficking and the coordination of counter narcotics technical assistance, as well as specific programmes to reduce demand. Evaluating the successes or failures of the Paris Pact is complicated in such a short period of time, specifically given the current situation in Afghanistan.

According to the French authorities, the Deauville Summit is the occasion to replicate this Paris Pact initiative. The G8 brought together some 20 countries in North and South America, Africa and Europe that are regional drivers in combating cocaine trafficking at a ministerial meeting on 10 May. As acknowledged among the objectives of the French presidency, “the line between consumer, producer and transit countries is becoming blurred. Producer and transit countries are faced with consumption problems and consumer countries are starting to produce drugs.”

This starting point should generate fruitful debates and discussions over priorities and the balance to be adopted between repression and prevention, taking into account the consumption side of the market. ♦