The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies

STRATEGIC MONITOR 2014

FOUR STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

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SECURITY

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De Strategische Monitor van het Den Haag Centrum voor Strategische Studies (HCSS) identificeert en analyseert bestaande en opkomende trends en ontwikkelingen op het gebied van internationale veiligheid en de gevolgen voor de veiligheid in Nederland en Europa. De HCSS Strategische Monitor vormt input voor de strategische vooruitblik en de beleidsvorming van de ministeries van Defensie, Buitenlandse Zaken en Veiligheid & Justitie. De Monitor is zowel een proces als een product: de resultaten en inzichten van de omgevingsanalyses worden jaarlijks gebundeld in een publiek beschikbaar rapport. Het rapport van vorig jaar, '*De Toekomst in Alle Staten'*, bevatte een brede 'horizon scan' van de veiligheidsomgeving. Dit jaar verkent de HCSS *Strategic Monitor 2014: Four Strategic Challenges* vier onderwerpen die in de horizon scan van de vorige jaarlijkse cyclus naar voren kwamen als van bijzonder belang voor de internationale veiligheidssituatie. Recente wetenschappelijke inzichten leren dat anticipatie van ontwikkelingen in complexe veiligheidsomgevingen het meest gebaat is bij het benaderen van deze ontwikkelingen vanuit diverse perspectieven. De vier afzonderlijke deelstudies in deze HCSS Strategische Monitor hanteren daarom met opzet een scala aan bronnen en kwalitatieve en kwantitatieve methoden.

Hieronder worden de belangrijkste bevindingen en veiligheidsimplicaties van elk van deze vier deelstudies samengevat.

Deelstudie I – Grootmachten en Assertiviteit

De afgelopen jaren is veel geschreven over de toegenomen assertiviteit van grootmachten en met name die van China en Rusland. In deze bijdrage gaan we nader op deze observatie in. Daarbij baseren we ons niet slechts op anekdotische voorbeelden of laten we ons leiden door de waan van de dag, maar volgen een meer systematische en reproduceerbare methode. De basis van onze analyse is een definitie en operationalisering van de notie van ´assertiviteit´ in internationale betrekkingen. Belangrijk hierbij is het onderscheid tussen feitelijke en retorische

assertiviteit. Vervolgens kwantificeren we de verschillende dimensies van assertiviteit van de grootmachten China en Rusland. We doen dit aan de hand van data verkregen uit de *Global Database of Events, Language, and Tone* (GDELT, een systeem dat bijna een kwart miljard wereldgebeurtenissen vanaf 1979 heeft geïndexeerd), uit de HCSS *Off-Base* (een database met daarin alle webpagina's van de ministeries van buitenlandse zaken van zeven belangrijke grootmachten, waaronder China en Rusland), en een aantal statistische indicatoren.

Het eerste belangrijke inzicht uit deze analyse is dat zowel China als Rusland in het afgelopen decennium inderdaad assertiever gedrag zijn gaan vertonen. Interessant is dat de assertiviteit van China in deze periode sterker is toegenomen, zowel feitelijk als retorisch, dan die van Rusland – hoewel hij in absolute aantallen nog steeds onder het Russische niveau blijft. (Noot: de verzamelde dataset loopt slechts tot medio 2013 en omvat dus niet de recente manifestaties van Russische assertiviteit in Oekraïne en op de Krim).

Een tweede bevinding is dat in beide landen de feitelijke assertiviteit meer is toegenomen dan de retorische assertiviteit. De daden van beide landen lijken in dit geval luider te spreken dan hun woorden. Desondanks wegen voor beide landen positieve of neutrale manifestaties van assertiviteit nog steeds op tegen negatieve uitingen daarvan. Wel suggereren alle gebruikte bronnen en analyses dat feitelijke vormen van assertiviteit sterk zijn toegenomen.

Op het gebied van militaire assertiviteit tonen alle datasets een flinke toename van Chinese macht, die zich meer en meer ook militair uit. Hoewel voor Rusland de *baseline* van militaire assertiviteit veel hoger blijft dan die van China, is hier de algemene trend minder eenduidig.

De veiligheidsimplicaties van een toename in assertiviteit zijn aanzienlijk. In de afgelopen decennia is er grotendeels een einde gekomen aan open militaire confrontatie tussen de grootmachten. Zelfs waar hun belangen met elkaar in conflict kwamen, hebben deze geschillen zich zelden geuit in directe bilaterale confrontatie. Er zijn zeker internationale spanningen geweest en deze zullen blijven spelen: met Rusland over landen en gebieden zoals de Balkan, Irak, Afghanistan en Syrië, en met China over Taiwan, Japan, de Zuid-Chinese Zee en Noord-Korea; en over controversiële onderwerpen zoals valutawaardering, vrijhandel en protectionisme, olie en gas, mensenrechten, mineralen en grondstoffen. Al deze spanningen worden echter getemperd door krachtige corrigerende dynamieken, waaronder gedeelde belangen

(terrorisme, wederzijdse economische afhankelijkheid, 'Chinamerica'), wederzijdse nucleaire afschrikking, uitruil van asymmetrische belangen ('deze punten zijn belangrijker voor hen dan voor ons'), en diverse verdragen, afspraken en regelingen. Dit alles heeft potentiële 'uitdagers' in de wereldorde er tot nut toe van weerhouden teveel 'op de rand te lopen' van conflictescalatie – in het Engels aangeduid met de term '*brinkmanship*'.

Onze analyse wijst echter wel op enkele bredere tendensen, feiten en gebeurtenissen die dit precaire evenwicht onder druk zetten. In het afgelopen jaar is gebleken dat zowel China als Rusland bereid zijn om, meer dan in het verleden, *'brinkmanship'* aan de dag te leggen. Sinds het einde van de Koude Oorlog zijn deze landen nog nooit zó ver gegaan in het riskeren van internationale crises om hun doelen te bereiken. De sterke toename in assertiviteit in het laatste decennium, óók op militair gebied, versterkt het risico dat conflicten in de toekomst – opnieuw – kunnen escaleren tot het niveau van openlijk geweld. Oftewel, het gevaar van een '21ste-eeuwse Cuba Crisis' neemt langzaam toe en het is de vraag of en hoe de escalatie van zulke conflicten beheerst kan worden.

Een intrinsiek gevaar van assertiviteit ligt in de vicieuze cirkel van opruiende retoriek. Deze creëert een mist van onzekere informatie, vermoedens en speculatie, waarin het steeds moeilijker wordt feiten en fictie te onderscheiden en gebeurtenissen in perspectief te plaatsen. Vandaar dat we het belang van bewijsvoering op basis van harde data in het geval van crisissituaties en dreigend conflict benadrukken, want dit stelt alle waarnemers en spelers, zowel de betrokkenen zelf als het wereldpubliek, in staat om zaken in perspectief te blijven zien.

Afgezien van de retoriek, laten zowel China als Rusland een stijgend niveau van feitelijke assertiviteit in hun gedrag zien. Zulke assertiviteit manifesteert zichzelf niet alleen in toenemende defensiebudgetten, maar ook in de vorm van nieuwe wapenwedlopen in specifieke domeinen zoals cyberspace. Dergelijke vormen van assertiviteit roepen vragen op voor Europa als geheel, en voor kleinere of middelgrote landen in het bijzonder. Wat kunnen Europese landen doen tegen zulke assertieve machtspolitiek, die zij juist al zeventig jaar lang proberen tegen te gaan? Kan zulk gedrag worden ingedamd, en zal het uiteindelijk overwaaien? Moeten Europese landen de banden met China en Rusland aanhalen om zo juist zaken in perspectief te kunnen blijven plaatsen? En zo ja, wat zou daarvoor nodig zijn – waar beginnen we?

Deelstudie II – De Rol van Scharnierstaten in Regionale en Mondiale Veiligheid

De relaties tussen staten worden in het huidig tijdsgewricht bepaald door een complexe, en soms ongemakkelijke, combinatie van ´liberale´ en ´realistische´ logica. Aan de ene kant zijn er vele tekenen die duiden op een voortschrijdende verwevenheid tussen staten, leidend tot een wereldwijde toename van welvaart en vrede. Aan de andere kant zijn er evenzeer signalen dat landen welvaart (mede) nastreven om macht mee op te kunnen bouwen. Bovendien zien we staten weer meer en meer scheidslijnen trekken in de wijze waarop ze met verschillende landen onderhandelen en handelen, en tegen wie ze zich te weer stellen.

Scharnierstaten zijn staten die in het bezit zijn van militaire, economische of ideologische strategische goederen waarop de grootmachten azen. Scharnierstaten bevinden zich hierdoor op de breuklijnen van het internationale systeem, gevangen tussen de overlappende en concurrerende invloedsferen van de grootmachten. Hun associatie met de grootmachten komt tot uiting in de vorm van 'banden die binden' (militaire en economische verdragen en culturele affiniteit) en door 'relaties die stromen' (de handel in wapens en grondstoffen, diplomatieke dialoog). Scharnierstaten vormen zo de brandpunten voor machts- en belangenconflicten tussen deze grootmachten. Grote en/of abrupte veranderingen in deze associaties hebben belangrijke gevolgen voor regionale en mondiale veiligheid. Scharnierstaten hebben historisch regelmatig een cruciale rol gespeeld in de veiligheid en stabiliteit van het internationale systeem. In deze deelstudie hebben we de veranderende positie van zo'n twee dozijn scharnierstaten in kaart gebracht en geanalyseerd hoe deze zich in de afgelopen dertig jaar hebben bewogen tussen verschillende invloedssferen.

In deze deelstudie hebben we eveneens geanalyseerd hoe de concurrerende invloedssferen van de grootmachten China, Europa, Rusland en de VS de afgelopen dertig jaar zijn verschoven. De nadruk hierbij ligt op zowel de rol van – als de effecten op belangrijke scharnierstaten. De resultaten bevestigen dat scharnierstaten de 'naden' vormen van het internationale systeem: zij spelen een belangrijke rol in regionale en mondiale stabiliteit en veiligheid.

Vanuit deze rol vloeien verschillende veiligheidsimplicaties voort. Sommige implicaties zijn vrij rechtstreeks, omdat ze voornamelijk betrekking op de strategische goederen van deze staten zelf. Zo kan een heroriëntatie van scharnierstaten gevolgen hebben voor militaire operaties en –stationering op hun grondgebied, en zo nieuwe militair-strategische parameters creëren; het kan bijvoorbeeld leiden tot het openen of sluiten van belangrijke toegangsroutes op land, in de lucht of op zee, maar het kan ook de

dynamiek van de mondiale energievoorziening veranderen. Naast deze vrij directe implicaties, bieden scharnierstaten ook tal van andere risico's én kansen die, mits goed begrepen, relevante aangrijpingspunten vormen voor beleidsmakers.

Enkele scharnierstaten oefenen actief invloed uit op hun directe veiligheidsomgeving, en vormen zo zélf een machtsfactor op het wereldtoneel. Zij kunnen de bestaande regionale orde onder druk zetten en mondiale ideologische breuklijnen versterken, en daarmee de machtsbalans verstoren en vrede en stabiliteit ondermijnen. Dergelijke actieve heroriëntaties van scharnierstaten bieden strategische bedreigingen en mogelijkheden met verregaande veiligheidsconsequenties voor zowel bestaande als opkomende machten.

Daarnaast zijn er ook landen die zich actief en bewust proberen te positioneren als bemiddelaar tussen verschillende grootmachten, of die zelfs de kloof tussen verschillende beschavingen proberen te overbruggen. De Verenigde Arabische Emiraten in het Midden-Oosten, Kazachstan in Centraal-Azië en Indonesië in Zuidoost Azië spelen een dergelijke rol, of proberen dat althans. Het onderhouden en verder ontwikkelen van betrekkingen met dergelijke staten maakt het mogelijk regionale veranderingen te bewerkstelligen die veel verder gaan dan de directe bilaterale verhouding alleen.

Andere scharnierstaten zijn passiever en worden zodoende tamelijk makkelijk onder druk gezet of gebruikt door grootmachten. Zij vormen als het ware de 'kreukelzones' in het internationale systeem; fragiel en behoeftig als ze zijn, vertonen zij soms toch agressief gedrag wanneer ze zich in het nauw gedreven voelen. Als regel kampen dergelijke staten met politieke instabiliteit en trage sociale en economische ontwikkeling. Niet zelden zijn zij ook bedeeld met veel natuurlijke grondstoffen. Dergelijke staten vinden we verspreid over de hele wereld, van Venezuela en Oezbekistan tot Irak. Ontwikkeling van beleid ten aanzien van dergelijke scharnierstaten – of het nu de bevordering van goed bestuur en ontwikkeling betreft, dan wel de gegarandeerde toegang tot strategische grondstoffen– begint met rekenschap van de invloedsfeer waarin het land zich bevindt.

Scharnierstaten zijn vaak verdeeld langs interne breuklijnen, religieus, etnisch, linguïstisch of cultureel van aard – soms allemaal tegelijk. Dergelijke breuklijnen worden manifest wanneer grootmachten duwen en trekken aan centrifugale krachten die eerder onderdrukt bleven. Ze worstelt Oekraïne momenteel met nationale en etnische verdeeldheid, en loopt ook Irak een reëel risico te bezwijken aan interne tegenstellingen.

Conflicten in scharnierstaten zijn in veel gevallen moeilijk te controleren, laat staan op te lossen. Buitenlandse machten bemoeien zich actief met de binnenlandse gang van zaken, en zijn het vanwege botsende belangen zelden eens over een oplossing. In deze impasse is er een flink risico op het verder uitzaaien van conflicten. Syrië is een klassiek voorbeeld van een dergelijke situatie, waarin de concurrerende strategische belangen van Rusland en de VS, alsook die van de regionale macht Iran, tot een patstelling hebben geleid. Een cliché mag het zijn, maar het is essentieel om de bredere internationale constellatie van strategische belangen mee te nemen in de zoektocht naar een oplossing.

Dan is er het risico dat grootmachten zich helemaal terugtrekken en een fragiele scharnierstaat in isolatie achterlaten. Zoals vaker in de geschiedenis gebeurde, duurt het vaak niet lang voordat dit tot veel ellende leidt. Afghanistan is een duidelijk voorbeeld. Nadat het land in de jaren '90 aan zijn lot werd overgelaten, werd het al snel een thuis- en trainingsbasis voor Al-Qaeda. Het Westen werd na de aanvallen van 11 September 2011 gedwongen om terug te keren. De les lijkt simpel: laat dergelijke landen nooit volledig aan hun lot over.

In sommige gevallen is er een verhoogde kans op direct conflict tussen grootmachten als deze in scharnierstaten inbreuk maken op elkaars invloedsferen. Een grootmacht kan te ver gaan in zijn assertief gedrag, het telkens verhogen van de inzet met als doel om de status quo te veranderen (of te handhaven). Omgekeerd kan zulk *brinkmanship* ook gebruikt worden door scharnierstaten zelf, bijvoorbeeld door zich roekeloos te gedragen in de gok dat ze concurrerende grootmachten tegen elkaar uit kunnen spelen. Een goed voorbeeld hiervan is het gedrag van Georgië in de aanloop tot de oorlog met Rusland in 2008. Georgië probeerde enthousiast de banden met het Westen aan te halen, en rekende zo op Westerse steun in het conflict met Rusland – steun die niet kwam. Dergelijk roekeloos gedrag van scharnierstaten verhoogt de kans op directe of indirecte confrontatie tussen de grootmachten. De les is ook in dit geval simpel: grootmachten moeten zich niet door een scharnierstaat een groter conflict in laten trekken.

Kortom, scharnierstaten hebben verschillende rollen in het internationale systeem. Sommige zijn spelbrekers, andere zijn vaandeldragers. Sommige zijn broze vazallen, anderen zijn zwak maar zeker niet gedwee. Sommigen dienen op veilige afstand gehouden te worden, anderen juist niet in de steek gelaten. Al deze rollen en functies zijn cruciaal om te begrijpen hoe scharnierstaten de internationale veiligheidssituatie kúnnen beïnvloeden. Het zijn deze rollen die beleidsmakers onder de loep moet

leggen voordat zij het beleid bepalen dat onze nationale en internationale veiligheid mede bepaalt.

Deelstudie III – Staten en Niet-Statelijke Actoren: de Tweedeling Voorbij

De HCSS Strategic Monitor 2012-2013 concludeerde dat de positie en het belang van staten in het internationale systeem weer toenamen. Bezien vanuit het scenarioraamwerk (zoals gebruikt in het Rapport *Verkenningen: Houvast voor de krijgsmacht van de toekomst*) zou dit kunnen worden opgevat als 'staten worden machtiger*, ten koste* van de macht van niet-statelijke actoren'. Om die reden gaan we in deze bijdrage nader in op de rol van niet-statelijke actoren, in de context van de machtsverdeling tussen statelijke en niet-statelijke actoren. Hierbij proberen we de simpele 'staat versus niet-staat' dichotomie te ontstijgen, omdat de functies en competenties van beide type actoren elkaar in de praktijk zowel aanvullen als overlappen.

In een wereld van genetwerkte diplomatie zien we het onderscheid tussen wat statelijk en wat niet-statelijk is vervagen. Zo kan de staat samen met niet-statelijke actoren gezamenlijke doelen stellen en nastreven, met als gevolg dat de relatie steeds minder een *zero-sum* karakter heeft. Dit past in een ontwikkeling waarin overheidsinstanties zich meer als regievoerder, *facilitator* en *regulator* van beleidsuitvoering opstellen, ten koste van het zelf uitvoeren van beleid. Ook diplomaten zullen meer als verbindingsambtenaar of coördinator functioneren, en zo hun invloed uitoefenen. Dit stelt ze in staat om maatschappelijke actoren te mobiliseren, of het nu gaat om niet-gouvernementele organisaties, charitatieve instellingen of andere maatschappelijke organisaties (die we hieronder bundelen onder de noemer 'NGO's').

Deze ontwikkelingen hebben een aantal gevolgen voor de positie en werkwijze van NGO's, want deze worden steeds belangrijker als directe ontvangers van donorsteun, in plaats van dat zulke steun wordt doorgesluisd via grote multilaterale instituties. Een andere trend is dat ook onder donoren zelf niet-statelijke actoren steeds belangrijker worden. NGO's nemen ook een grotere rol in op het gebied van het stichten en in stand houden van vrede, soms samen met staten, soms juist de statelijke rol betwistend. Door hun groeiende rol in de (internationale) samenleving, en hun interactie met diverse groepen–inclusief agressieve niet-statelijke actoren–die wereldwijd actief zijn, beschikken NGO's over informatie en ervaring die niet altijd makkelijk te verkrijgen is voor overheden of internationale organisaties. Tenslotte

hebben ze een goede positie om bepaalde waarden te kunnen bevorderen en de publieke opinie te mobiliseren, teneinde de beleidsagenda van een land te beïnvloeden.

Activiteiten van agressieve niet-statelijke actoren hebben vaak directe gevolgen voor de mondiale veiligheid. Mondialisering creëert veel kansen voor zulke organisaties die meestal transnationaal actief zijn. Zo maken zij actief gebruik van *cyberspace*, het wereldwijde financiële systeem en transportnetwerken, zeker waar terroristische groeperingen en criminele organisaties hecht samenwerken. De knooppunten in deze netwerken – zee- en luchthavens, computerservers, banken – vormen het zwaartepunt van hun activiteiten.

Internationale NGO's, de 'kinderen van de mondialisering' die net zoveel van deze ontwikkeling profiteren als terroristen of criminelen, hebben vaak een goede uitgangspositie om overheden bij te staan tegenover de dreiging van transnationaal opererende agressieve niet-statelijke actoren. Zo kunnen zij dienen als een bron van vitale informatie, als liaison met het maatschappelijk middenveld en met personen die zich begeven in en tussen de diverse netwerkknooppunten waar de activiteiten van agressieve niet-statelijke actoren gestalte krijgen. Een slimme en innovatieve manier om deze functies te gebruiken maakt overheden krachtiger in hun optreden tegen agressieve niet-statelijke actoren. Tegelijkertijd kan zo'n benadering NGO's helpen in hun maatschappelijke functies.

Dit alles heeft implicaties voor de manier waarop staten hun kerntaak, het bieden van veiligheid aan hun burgers, kunnen en moeten uitoefenen. Overheden lopen het risico relevantie te verliezen, omdat de complexiteit van de hedendaagse omgeving het moeilijk maakt veiligheidsfuncties geheel zelfstandig uit te voeren. Staten zullen steeds minder de uitvoering van hun veiligheidstaak volledig in eigen hand kunnen houden. Ze zullen moeten inzetten op het handhaven van de *controle* over het gebruik van macht – *hard* en *soft power*. Ze blijven echter wel de beheerders van macht. Een gevolg hiervan is dat overheden in hun veiligheidstaak meer 'uitgesplitst' moeten opereren - verschillende delen van de overheid moeten actief zijn in verschillende soorten, vaak grensoverschrijdende netwerken. Oftewel, staten moeten net als niet-statelijke actoren, meer en meer als netwerkorganisatie kunnen functioneren.

Tot slot, niet-statelijke actoren zijn de drijvende kracht achter een wereldorde die niet alleen multipolair is, maar ook intens genetwerkt. De status quo van de internationale stabiliteit en orde wordt niet meer alleen afgemeten aan de hand van militaire of economische macht, maar mede bepaald door de legitimiteit en reputatie van actoren,

zowel statelijk als niet-statelijk. Mede hierom wordt *soft power* van cruciaal belang voor het vermogen van een staat om stabiliteit te garanderen. De evolutie naar een genetwerkte wereld gaat gepaard met een proces van legalisering en juridisering, hetgeen in praktijk soms betekent dat de verantwoordelijkheid voor de uitvoering van besluiten in de handen van onafhankelijke derde partijen (voornamelijk rechtbanken) wordt gelegd. Tegelijkertijd zal internationaal recht als '*hard law*' relatief minder belangrijk worden in vergelijking tot de '*soft law instruments',* die meer geschikt zijn voor niet-statelijke actoren.

Deelstudie IV – Instabiliteit in de Periferie van Europa

Het aantal en de intensiteit van interstatelijke en intrastatelijke conflicten is drastisch verminderd sinds het einde van de Koude Oorlog. Deze neerwaartse langetermijntrend is echter de afgelopen jaren doorbroken door een toename van conflicten in de periferie van Europa – het Midden-Oosten en Noord Afrika (de MENA-regio) in het bijzonder. De politieke kenteringen in deze regio gaven misschien hoop op een betere toekomst, maar bieden geen enkele garantie. Op de korte termijn zetten conflicten de toon, en hebben zij veel MENA-landen gedestabiliseerd. Deze ontwikkeling baart Europese landen vanzelfsprekend zorgen, ook omdat destabilisatie in de MENA-regio de eigen veiligheid en welvaart van Europa in gevaar brengt. Boten vol vluchtelingen uit het door interne strijd geteisterde Libië spoelen aan op de stranden van Lampedusa, de Arabische Lente veroorzaakte in de hele wereld bezorgdheid over energieleveringszekerheid en Europese jihadisten strijden in Syrië.

In deze deelstudie hebben we verscheidene dreigingen geanalyseerd op basis van vier 'wegen naar conflict'. We gebruiken deze om toekomstige ontwikkelingen te kunnen inschatten. Concreet hebben we gekeken naar hoe politieke onrust, economische en sociale problematiek, afhankelijkheid van olie-export en etnische en religieuze spanningen conflicten in de regio kunnen doen ontbranden.

Politieke onrust. Landen die geconfronteerd worden met een sterk veranderend politiek landschap en/of met regimes die in hun bestaan bedreigd worden, zijn kwetsbaar voor conflicten. Zij zijn minder goed in staat om onrust te verminderen en zwakke politieke instituties vormen een stimulans voor groepen in de samenleving om de politieke situatie naar hun hand te zetten. Dit is met name het geval wanneer politieke onrust gepaard gaat met geweld in een land waar de politieke macht sterk geconcentreerd is of was. Landen met een hoge kwetsbaarheid zijn Irak, Jemen, Libië, Syrië, en Mali. Landen met redelijke kwetsbaarheid zijn: Egypte, Tunisië, Bahrein, en de Palestijnse gebieden.

Economische en sociale problematiek is wijdverspreid in de regio en zorgt regelmatig voor protest onder de bevolking. De Arabische Lente heeft de problemen binnen veel landen verergerd, met name in de landen waar de onlusten de meeste impact hadden. In de meer welvarende landen in de Golfregio, is voedsel- en waterproblematiek voornamelijk een economische zorg, die overheden ondervangen door het subsidiëren van consumptie en de import van voedsel en water enerzijds en anderzijds door te investeren in ontzilting en irrigatie. In minder welvarende landen ligt dit financieel moeilijk. De situatie wordt bemoeilijkt door grote groepen werkloze jongeren, die weinig tot niets te verliezen hebben en minder terughoudend zijn om geweld te gebruiken. Landen met een hoge kwetsbaarheid zijn Irak, Jemen, Libië, en Mali. Redelijk kwetsbare landen zijn Algerije, Jordanië, Tunesië, Marokko en Iran.

Landen die afhankelijk zijn van olie en gas export om de staatskist gevuld te houden en verder weinig andere financiële buffers hebben, zijn erg ontvankelijk voor een daling in de prijs in olie. Landen met een grote kwetsbaarheid zijn: Irak, Jemen, Algerije en Iran. Landen met een redelijke kwetsbaarheid zijn: Libië, Bahrein, en Oman.

Religieuze en etnische spanningen zijn wijdverspreid in de regio, met meerdere landen die in het bijzonder gevoelig zijn voor specifieke types van religieus of etnisch conflict. Grootschalige conflicten kunnen uitbreken door een drang naar onafhankelijkheid van een regio binnen een land, of vanwege etnische en/of religieuze groepen van significante grootte die strijden om de controle over een land. Etnisch en religieus geweld op kleinere schaal kan voortkomen uit kleine groepen extremisten in landen waar staatscontrole zwak is, of waar minderheden door overheden worden onderdrukt. Landen om in de gaten te houden met betrekking tot afscheidingsbewegingen zijn Koerdistan (Irak, Iran, Syrië, Turkije), Marokko (West-Sahara), Jemen, Mali, Algerije, Libië en Israël en de Palestijnse gebieden. Landen om in de gaten te houden met betrekking tot een strijd om de staatsmacht zijn Bahrein, Egypte, Libië, Syrië, Irak, Jordanië, Libanon. Landen waar extremisme of overheidsrepressie van etnische of religieuze minderheden kan oplaaien zijn Irak, Jemen, Mali, Iran, Egypte, Algerije, Marokko, Saudi-Arabië, Tunesië en Koeweit.

Deze vier 'wegen naar conflict' bevestigen dat grote delen van het Midden-Oosten en Noord-Afrika op dit moment in rep en roer zijn, variërend van gelokaliseerde voedselrellen tot hele regio's die strijden voor onafhankelijkheid. Er zijn hoopvolle ontwikkelingen, waaronder het ontstaan van vrijere en democratischer samenlevingen. Maar een democratiseringsproces is geen enkele reis naar stabiliteit. En het pad naar

conflict kan doorlopen naar Europa, waar het onze veiligheid en economische belangen in de MENA-regio aantast.

We hebben in deze deelstudie tevens geanalyseerd hoe conflicten in de MENA-regio de veiligheid en economische situatie in Europa beïnvloeden. Vanuit een veiligheidsperspectief hebben we vijf risico's geïdentificeerd:

Vluchtelingenstromen zijn vaak vooral een regionale zorg, maar de toename van conflicten in de periferie van Europa leidt ook tot een sterke toename van het aantal (illegale) vluchtelingen in met name Zuid-Europa (in het bijzonder Cyprus en Malta). Indirect zet dit druk op EU visa-overeenkomsten en kan het aanleiding geven tot sociale instabiliteit in landen waar veel vluchtelingen zijn ondergebracht.

Europese jihadisten worden aangetrokken door religieus getinte conflicten in de regio. Wanneer deze door conflict getekende veteranen terugkeren naar eigen land, kunnen zij een bedreiging vormen voor de nationale veiligheid en rechtsorde. Alhoewel de precieze risico's moeilijk in te schatten zijn, kunnen toekomstige sektarische en relatief makkelijk 'toegankelijke' conflicten significante hoeveelheden buitenlandse strijders aantrekken, zoals op dit moment het geval is in Syrië, Libanon, Irak, Libië, en, tot op zekere hoogte, ook Mali en Algerije.

Terroristische aanvallen op Europese doelwitten in de MENA-regio zijn een groeiende zorg, met name in de landen waar de autoriteit van de regering relatief zwak is, zoals Irak, Jemen, Libië, Syrië, Palestina en Mali.

Georganiseerde misdaad, zoals drugs- en wapensmokkel, is nog steeds voornamelijk een regionale zorg. Mensensmokkel stijgt naar aanleiding van conflicten in de periferie van Europa.

Horizontale escalatie van conflicten lijkt niet erg waarschijnlijk, maar conflicten verslechteren de veiligheid en de humanitaire situatie in de regio en kunnen zodanig de barrière verlagen voor Europese landen om over te gaan tot militair ingrijpen.

Daarnaast hebben deze ontwikkelingen ook een economische impact. *Stijgende olieprijzen* kunnen de belangen van Europese landen schaden. Conflicten of de angst voor toenemend geweld in de regio drijft historisch gezien de olieprijzen op. Aangezien de meeste Europese landen hun olie importeren om in hun energiebehoeften te voorzien (uitzonderingen zijn Noorwegen, Denemarken, en tot op zekere hoogte het

Verenigd Koninkrijk, Roemenië en Estland), vermindert dit in potentie de Europese economische groei. Dit baart grotere zorg in landen met brandstof-intensieve economieën, zoals de meeste Oost-Europese landen. Dit gevaar is voornamelijk aanwezig als er een conflict ontstaat in of nabij landen die olie produceren of een belangrijke schakel zijn in het transport en de handel van olie.

Leveringsonderbreking van brandstof is minder problematisch dan prijsschokken, maar ook dit kan leiden tot economische problemen op de korte termijn, omdat de olie-import via een andere route of leverancier moet worden zeker gesteld. Onderbrekingen van de levering van gas is het meest zorgwekkend, aangezien gas moeilijk kan worden vervangen door andere grondstoffen en met name verkocht wordt op regionale markten. Dit maakt de Europese landen die voor hun gas afhankelijk zijn van Algerije – waaronder Frankrijk, Spanje en Italië – zeer kwetsbaar voor leveringsonderbrekingen.

(Niet-brandstof) handelsstromen en slechte rendementen op investeringen veroorzaakt door conflicten in de MENA-regio hebben ook een impact op Europa, zij het op een kleinere schaal. Investeringen zijn relatief klein, met ongeveer 1% van het BNP in directe buitenlandse investeringen in de regio in 2012, en 2,68% van het BNP in (niet-brandstof) handelsvolume in datzelfde jaar. De meeste handel en investeringen gaan naar, en komen van de meer stabiele landen (Turkije, Verenigde Arabische Emiraten en Saudi-Arabië). Frankrijk, Italië, Spanje en Portugal handelen echter relatief meer met de instabiele landen in Noord Afrika, zoals Algerije, Libië, Tunesië en Egypte.

Tot Slot

Al deze vier studies benoemen een aantal belangrijke ontwikkelingen die de dynamiek van de wereldwijde veiligheidsomgeving beïnvloeden. Deze onderwerpen zijn geselecteerd op de basis van de resultaten van de horizonscan die vorig jaar is uitgevoerd om inzicht te bieden in de belangrijke specifieke risico's voor de Nederlandse en Europese veiligheid. Het is dan ook geen verrassing dat deze deelstudies een enigszins somber beeld schetsen van de huidige veiligheidssituatie.

Ondanks deze selectie-bias, schetsen deze studies een zorgwekkende dynamiek in de nationale en internationale veiligheidsomgeving: een groeiende assertiviteit in het gedrag van de grootmachten, ook op militair vlak; het risico van escalatie op de breuklijnen van het internationale systeem waar invloedssferen overlappen; en een substantiële kans op een langdurige periode van conflict en onrust in de MENA-regio.

Dit stelt Westerse politici en beleidsmakers voor stevige, en deels ook nieuwe, uitdagingen.

Al deze gebeurtenissen onderstrepen opnieuw de mate waarin 'interne' en 'externe' veiligheid onlosmakelijk met elkaar verbonden zijn. De cyberaanvallen op Nederlandse banken met onbekende geografische herkomst. De jonge Nederlanders die deelnemen aan de Syrische burgeroorlog die getraind, gehard en getraumatiseerd terugkomen in Nederland. De confrontatie tussen Europa en Rusland over Oekraïne en de relatie tussen een economische boycot enerzijds en Nederlandse handelsbelangen anderzijds. De hiermee gepaard gaande risico's zijn even rijk als gevarieerd. Het enige hierbij passende antwoord is een geïntegreerd veiligheidsbeleid.

Kortom, de ontwikkelingen nopen tot een creatieve benadering van het Nederlandse veiligheids-, buitenlands- en defensiebeleid. HCSS is ervan overtuigd dat, ter ondersteuning van dit laatste, onze veiligheids- en defensieorganisaties behoefte houden aan een voortdurend, gebalanceerd, en op feitelijke analyse gebaseerd strategisch anticipatievermogen.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Since its last bottom-up security and defense review (2010), the Dutch government has committed itself to strengthening its 'strategic anticipation' function. Various public and private actors participate in this effort by examining trends and developments in the global security environment and by teasing out their potential security implications for the Netherlands and Europe. HCSS' contribution to this process consists of the *HCSS Strategic Monitor*, which is produced annually and takes a number of different forms. Last year's edition, *De Toekomst in Alle Staten,* contained a broad horizon scan of the global security environment. For this year's edition HCSS and the three concerned government departments (Defense, Foreign Affairs and Security and Justice) selected four topics that emerged from last year's horizon scan and that were deemed to deserve a more in-depth exploration. True to HCSS's multi-method and multi-perspective approach to foresight, these 4 explorations were carried out using a wide range of tools, sources and methods. The key findings and security implications for each of these four studies are summarized below.

Study I – Great Power Assertiveness

In recent years there has been much talk about how two great powers, China and Russia, have allegedly become much more assertive in world politics. These allegations are typically based on a number of particularly striking news events. But how do we know that these events are not just cherry-picked? And if we look a bit further back in history than the 'commentariat' typically does, is it really the case that recent behavior or rhetoric has changed dramatically in these two countries?

This study tries to provide evidence-based answers to these questions. It starts out by offering a definition of what international assertiveness means and how such a definition can be operationalized. It then develops a more systematic and replicable method to track this phenomenon. This methods draws upon three different types of sources: the Global Database of Events, Language, and Tone (GDELT, which covers

almost a quarter billion categorized events since 1979 worldwide), the HCSS Off-Base (which contains all web-pages of the websites of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of 7 important powers, including China and Russia) and a number of selected statistical indicators. This broad analysis generated a number of interesting findings.

The first major finding is that both powers have indeed displayed increasing amounts of assertiveness over the past decade. In this period, China appears to have ratcheted up both its rhetorical and its factual assertiveness significantly more than Russia has, although it started from a significantly lower baseline and still remains below Russia's level. [Note: we stopped collecting the data for this study around mid-2013 and therefore 'missed' some of the more recent indications of assertiveness such as the recent events in Ukraine and the Crimea].

A second robust finding is that in both countries (and for most – if not all – aspects of assertiveness), factual assertiveness has increased more than rhetorical assertiveness. This means that both countries' acts speak louder than their words. Positive/neutral assertiveness continues to outweigh negative assertiveness for both countries. But factual types of assertiveness have increased quite robustly across all sources and methods.

In terms of military assertiveness all our datasets show a rising Chinese power that is increasingly asserting its military muscle. Russia presents a more mixed picture on this, although the Russian baseline remains significantly higher than the Chinese one.

The security implications of increased assertiveness are far-reaching. Over the past few decades direct conflict between great powers has largely disappeared. Great powers often quarreled amongst each other, but these disputes rarely led to direct bilateral confrontation. Tensions occurred (and continue to occur) in various domains: with Russia over issues such as the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan or Syria, and with China over Taiwan, Japan, the South China Sea, or North Korea. They also occurred over different functional issues such as currencies, free trade and protectionism, oil and gas, human rights, minerals, etc. But these various tensions were mitigated by some powerful countervailing trends, including shared interests (terrorism, economic interdependence, 'Chinamerica'), shared nuclear deterrence, the bartering and exchange of asymmetric interests ("these things matter more to them than to us") and various bargains/side payments. So, on balance, potential challengers seemed to have somehow felt inhibited to engage into too much brinkmanship.

Our findings do point to some broader trends (as well as concrete facts and events) that challenge that delicate balance. Last year both China and Russia have been willing to push their brinkmanship further than at any time since the end of the Cold War. Over the past few years increased levels of assertiveness (including military ones) may have increased the conflict and escalation potential for – once again – direct armed conflict. The danger of a *Cuban Missile Crisis*-type event may very well be increasing again, which could lead to unmanageable escalation.

One intrinsic danger of assertiveness lies in the informational fog that such cycles of inflammatory rhetoric can trigger. In this fog of assertiveness, it becomes ever harder to discern the hard facts and to put events in perspective. This greatly increases the contribution that evidence-based datasets can make to international security as they allow all observers (both the stakeholders themselves and the public at large) to maintain some perspective.

But beyond the rhetoric, there is also growing factual assertiveness on the part of both China and Russia. Assertiveness in the military realm is manifested not only in increased expenditures but also in various types of new arms races in particular domains, such as cyberspace. Such forms of factual assertiveness raise questions for Europe in general, and for smaller and medium-sized countries in particular. What can be done about precisely the type of great power assertiveness that European countries have tried to bridle in themselves for the past seventy years? Will these forms of assertiveness remain contained and eventually blow over or will they become the new normal? Does this mean that Europe has to start beefing up its more traditional 'power' resources to secure its seat at the 'Great Power' table? Or should European countries start (re)building ties with China and Russia and can we play a special role in putting things in perspective thereby letting cooler heads prevail? And if so, what would be required for that?

Study II – The Role of Pivot States in Regional and Global Security

Contemporary international relations are shaped by an intricate and to a certain extent uneasily co-existing mixture of liberal and realist logics. On the one hand, there are many signs pointing towards inexorably growing interdependencies between states that pave the way to prosperity and peace. On the other hand, there are similar signs that states seem not be able to escape realist logic: they persist in pursuing power. Moreover, states are increasingly drawing lines again, lines with respect to whom they talk to, whom they trade with, and whom they defend against.

Pivot states are states that possess military, economic or ideational strategic assets that are coveted by great powers. Pivot states are caught in the middle of overlapping spheres of influence of multiple great powers as measured by associations that consist of ties that bind (military and economic agreements and cultural affinities) and relationships that flow (arms and commodities trade and discourse). A change in a pivot state's association has important repercussions for regional and global security. States that find themselves in overlapping spheres of interest are focal points of where great power interests can collide and also clash. States located at the seams of the international system have at various moments in history been crucial to the security and stability of the international system. For approximately two dozen pivot states we have tracked how they have sat in and then shifted from one sphere of influence to another over the past thirty years.

Our analysis reveals the waxing and waning of the spheres of influence of China, Europe, Russia and the US over the past thirty years and proceeds with an examination of pivot states. Unsurprisingly, pivot states do in fact play a very important role in regional and global security and stability.

Some of the security implications related to pivot states are rather straightforward, since they principally relate to the strategic goods of these pivot states. As such, shifts in the position of pivot states can, amongst other things, affect military staging rights, create new military-strategic perimeters, limit or open up lines of communications , and affect the world's energy supply dynamics. But beyond these fairly straightforward implications pivot states harness plenty of perils and promises, which, if understood well, can be usefully leveraged by policymakers.

A few pivot states energetically mold their immediate security environment pulling considerable weight at the international stage. They are challengers of existing norms of regional orders and cause wider ideological ruptures in the system. Shifting pivot states can dramatically upstage the regional balance of power and upset regional peace and stability. Hence, differences in ideological orientation continue to create strategic opportunities, that carry a wide range of security ramifications for old and new powers alike.

There are also states that actively try to position themselves as crucial mediators and that build bridges and gateways between different great powers, or even across perceived civilizational chasms that cleave through the international system. The UAE in the Middle East, Kazakhstan in Central Asia, and Indonesia in South East Asia fulfill

or attempt to fulfill such a role in the international system. Relations with these states can be cultivated, if the aim is to affect change beyond bilateral relationship.

Other pivot states are more passively pushed around and pressured into associations with great powers. Trapped in 'crush zones', or 'shatterbelts', these states are indeed fragile, needy and occasionally aggressive. As a rule, they feature political instability and low levels of social and economic development. Not seldom are they also endowed with plenty of natural resources. From Venezuela to Uzbekistan down to Iraq: they are found scattered around the world. Whatever the policy aim – whether it is the promotion of good governance or the uninterrupted access to their resources – before setting down on any policy path, it is worth asking whose sphere of influence these pivot states belong to.

Intrastate cleavages often divide pivot states. Such cleavages can be religious, ethnic, linguistic or cultural in nature, and more often than not they are a combination of all of the above. And it is precisely when these pivot states are caught in the middle, when opposing great powers push and pull in opposite directions, that they are torn apart. Hitherto weak centrifugal forces might suddenly become unleashed. Ukraine is currently succumbing to divisive forces, and Iraq is at real risk of falling apart.

Conflict in pivot states caught in overlapping spheres of influence proves in many cases difficult to resolve. On top of the active meddling of outside powers, these outside powers are hardly ever able to come to arrangements that they can mutually agree to. As a result, conflicts turn into stalemates that have a real risk of metastasizing. Syria is a contemporary case in point, where the strategic interests of Russia and the US, as well as of regional powers like Iran, have produced a deadlock with, as yet, no end in sight.

Then there is also the risk of abandonment when great powers fully withdraw from pivot states, leaving them behind in isolation. Before long, as has happened on numerous occasions, the pivot state comes back to haunt us with a vengeance. Afghanistan, for instance, was abandoned in the 1990s only to be used by Al Quaeda as a terrorist training ground, and, subsequently, top the international security agenda following the 9/11 attacks of 2001. The answer is simple: do not leave such countries to their own devices.

In some cases there is an increased likelihood of great power conflict when pivot states fall victim to great powers encroaching on each other's spheres of influence.

Great powers competing over respective spheres of influence sometimes employ what is commonly called brinksmanship, either to change or, alternatively, to uphold the status quo. But brinksmanship can be exercised by pivot states, too. These pivot states can be moral hazards or 'rogue pivots' if they behave recklessly while betting on the opposing great power to come to their rescue. Georgia in the run up to the 2008 war with Russia is a case in point. Georgia had been keen on bolstering ties with the West and was betting on Western assistance in its conflict with Russia, while the latter did not materialize in the end. Brinksmanship of pivot states also introduces a real risk of direct or indirect confrontation between great powers. The solution seems simple: do not let a rogue pivot state pull you into a great conflict.

Beyond the security implications we also examine the plethora of immediate and diverse security risks that emerge in connection with them. Pivot states have different security roles in the international system. Some pivot states are spoilers, others are flag bearers. Some are frail vassals, others are weak but surely not meek. Some should be kept at a safe distance from, others, despite being in dire straits, should not be abandoned. All these roles are crucial for understanding how pivot states can, if not necessarily will, shape the security environment. And it is these roles that policymakers should take a closer look at before formulating policies that will shape our security environment.

Study III – State and Non-State Actors: Beyond the Dichotomy

Last year's HCSS Strategic Monitor concluded that state actors had regained some of their dominance in the international system. From the perspective of the Scenario Framework (of the *Verkenningen*, the 2009 Dutch Future Policy Survey), this conclusion could be interpreted as 'states are becoming more powerful to the detriment of the power of non-state actors'. To further analyze this, we have looked at the role of non-state actors, precisely in the context of the power distribution between state and non-state actors. We found that beyond the state-non-state dichotomy, these actor types both complement and overlap one another´s capabilities and competencies.

In a world of network diplomacy, lines between what is state and non-state are becoming increasingly blurred. When relations between state and non-state actors are no longer perceived as zero-sum, making common cause will become much easier. The functioning of state authorities will also evolve, and they become more administrators and regulators, rather than implementers of policy. In the same vein, diplomats will come to function more like liaison officers and coordinators. It is from these roles that their influence will flow, enabling them to better mobilize and take

advantage of what non-state actors have to offer, whether it concerns NGOs or other network-like organizations.

These developments have several implications for how civil society actors (especially non-governmental organizations, NGOs) operate. One is that NGOs are becoming more important as direct recipients of donor support, rather than that such support is channeled through multilateral agencies. Another trend is that among donors themselves non-state actors are becoming more important. NGOs are also becoming more important where peacemaking is concerned. Because of their growing dominance in (international) civil society and their interaction with many groups – including aggressive non-state actors – that are active in global networks, NGOs have access to information that is hard to come by for governments or international organizations. On top of that, they can also promote values and mobilize public opinion to impact the public policy agenda in a given country.

Aggressive non-state actors invariably have more direct consequences for security interests. Globalization creates opportunities for transnationally operating aggressive non-state actors. They make use of global cyber networks, financial networks and transportation networks, especially when terrorist groups and criminal groups make common cause. The nodal points - seaports, airports, computer servers, banks – in all these networks form the centers of gravity of their operations.

International NGOs, which have sprung from globalization and benefit from it in much the same way as terrorists and criminals do, are in an advantageous position to help governments to deal with the transnational threat of aggressive non-state actors. They can be a source of vital information and liaise with civil society and people moving through the diverse network nodes, where much of the activity undertaken by aggressive non-state actors take form. A smart and innovative way to benefit from these functions could make the state more resilient in its dealings with aggressive Non-State Actors and, at the same time, leverage NGOs for the benefit of civil society as a whole.

The implications for security policies all have to do with the way states can and should exercise their core task of providing security to their citizens. They run the risk of losing relevance because today's complex environment makes it more and more difficult to exercise security functions in a stand-alone fashion. Their best bet appears to be to ensure that they continue to *control* the use of force. This implies that while states may maintain a full monopoly on the use of force, they will continue to be

administrators of power, rather than executors. One consequence of this is that the state will operate in a 'disaggregated' fashion – that is, different parts of the government will be active in different kinds of networks, many of which are cross-border. The most concrete consequence of this development is that state actors, like non-state actors, must be able to operate as network organizations in a global network environment.

To conclude: non-state actors are drivers that shape not just a multipolar, but an intensely networked world order. The status quo of international stability and order is no longer measured only in terms of military and economic might. The legitimacy and reputation of actors, both state and non-state, is becoming equally important. As a result, soft power remains of crucial importance for a state to ensure stability. This evolution towards a networked world order is accompanied by legalization and judicialization, meaning that accountability for the implementation of decisions is shifted into the hands of impartial third parties (principally courts). Simultaneously, international law as 'hard law' will become relatively less important compared to 'soft law instruments', which are more suitable for non-state actors.

Study IV – Instability in the Periphery of Europe

The number and intensity of inter- and intrastate conflict has dropped dramatically since the end of the Cold War. However, this downward trend is somewhat reversed in recent years, not least due to an increase in conflicts on the fringes of Europe –the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in particular. Political upheavals have spurred hopes for a better future of the region, but this is far from guaranteed. In the short-term, conflict has increased and destabilized many MENA countries. This is particularly concerning for European states, because destabilization and conflict may affect our own security and prosperity. Refugees are fleeing civil war torn Libya and arriving at the coast of Lampedusa, the Arab Spring sparked energy security concerns across the globe, and European jihadists are now fighting in Syria.

We have analyzed these different vulnerabilities and have identified four pathways to conflict in order to assess future trajectories. Specifically, we analyzed how political turmoil, poor economic and social conditions, fuel export dependency and ethnic and religious tensions may spark conflict in the region.

Political turmoil. Countries confronted with a changing political landscape, or with regimes facing existential threat, are more vulnerable to conflicts. They are less apt at mitigating turmoil, and fragile institutions create an incentive for people and groups to

try and shape the political context. This is particularly so when political turmoil is violent in a state where power is, or was, highly concentrated. Highly vulnerability states are: Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Syria, and Mali. Countries with a medium vulnerability are: Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, and the Palestinian Territories.

Economic and social issues are widespread throughout the region and regularly spark protests. The Arab Spring has amplified economic problems in many countries, especially in countries that were most affected by the upheavals. In richer countries in the Gulf, food and water issues are predominantly an economic concern that governments can buy-off by subsidizing consumption and importing water and food, or investing in desalination and irrigation. Elsewhere, this is financially difficult. The situation is compounded by large cohorts of unemployed youngsters, which offer a 'supply of cheap rebel labor'. Highly vulnerability states are: Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Syria, and Mali. Countries with a medium vulnerability are: Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, and the Palestinian Territories.

Fuel export dependent countries that rely on oil and gas revenues to fill state coffers and have limited financial buffers are more vulnerable to a decline in oil price. Highly vulnerable states are: Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Syria, Palestinian Territories, Mali, and Egypt. Countries with a medium vulnerability are: Algeria, Jordan, Tunisia, Morocco, and Iran.

Religious and ethnic tensions are widely spread throughout the region, with multiple states remaining vulnerable to specific types of religious and ethnic conflict. Large-scale conflicts may erupt due to nations looking for a state or sizeable ethnic and/or religious groups vying for state control. Smaller-scale ethnic and religious violence may emanate from (smaller) extremist groups where state control of territories is poor, or where governments suppress minorities. Countries to watch for secessionist movements are Kurdish areas (Iraq, Iran, Syria, Turkey), Morocco (Western Sahara), Yemen, Mali, Algeria, Libya, and the Palestinian Territories. Countries with a high vulnerability to conflict due to a struggle for state control are: Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon. Countries to watch for smaller scale ethnic and religious violence are Iraq, Yemen, Mali, Iran, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Kuwait.

From food riots to nations struggling for statehood, these four roads to conflict help gauge state vulnerability to specific forms of conflict. There are hopeful developments, such as the green shoots of new democracies. But democratization is no one-way ticket to stability. And the path to conflict may continue to Europe, affecting the security and economic interests of states on the continent.

Secondly, we have analyzed how conflicts in the MENA-region affect the security and economic situation in Europe. From a security perspective, we identified five risks:

- *Refugee flows* are mostly a regional concern, but increasing conflict on the borders of Europe does lead to increasing (illegal) immigration, especially to such Southern European countries as Cyprus and Malta. Indirectly, this puts pressure on EU visa agreements and may fuel social instability in countries with large refugee communities.

- *European jihadists* may be drawn into conflicts. The return of these battle-tested veterans poses an increased national security risk. Although the precise risks are difficult to assess, future sectarian and easily accessible conflicts may draw in similar amounts of foreign fighters as is now the case in Syria. Lebanon, Iraq, Libya and to, a lesser extent, Mali and Algeria are vulnerable to these dynamics.

- *Terrorist attacks* on European targets in the region is an increasing concern in countries where state authority is weak, such as Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Syria, the Palestinian Territories and Mali.

- *Organized crime*, such as drug trafficking and weapons smuggling, is (still) predominantly a regional concern. Human trafficking is increasing following conflicts on the borders of Europe.

- *Horizontal escalation of conflicts* does not seem very likely, but conflicts worsen the security and humanitarian situation in the region and may thereby lower the threshold for European states to intervene militarily.

Further, these developments will have economic impact as well. *Increasing oil prices* may impact European interests. Actual conflict, or the fear of increased violence in the region has historically driven up oil prices. Since most European countries import most of their oil to meet their energy needs (exceptions are Norway, Denmark, and, to a lesser extent, the UK, Romania and Estonia), this has the potential to hamper European economic growth. This is even more concerning in countries with very fuel-intensive economies, as is the case in many Eastern European countries. This danger is particularly high when conflicts erupt in or near the oil-producing countries or important trade routes.

Fuel supply disruptions are less problematic than price spikes, but due to the rerouting of imports they may nevertheless lead to short-term economic problems. Interruptions of gas imports are most concerning, since gas is less fungible and sold on regional markets. This renders European states that import gas from Algeria – France, Spain and Italy – particularly vulnerable to supply disruptions.

Further, interruptions of (non-fuel) *trade flows and poor return on investments*, may impact European states as well. Investments are relatively small, with around 1% of GDP in FDI stocks in the region in 2012, and 2.68% of GDP in (non-fuel) trade volume in the same year. Most trade and investment goes to and comes from more stable states in the region (Turkey, the UAE and Saudi-Arabia). Yet France, Italy, Spain and Portugal also trade relatively more with more vulnerable Northern African countries such as Algeria, Libya, Tunisia and Egypt.

To Conclude

These four studies cover a number of important developments that are affecting the dynamics of the global security environment. Their topics were selected on the basis of some of the findings of last year's horizon-scan that were thought to represent particular risks to Dutch and European security. It is therefore not surprising that they paint a rather gloomy picture of the current security environment. But despite this year's selection bias, these studies still clearly point to some highly worrisome dynamics in the global and regional security environment. We highlight the growing assertiveness (also the military one) in great power behavior, various escalation risks at the seams of the international system where spheres of influence overlap, and a substantial chance for a prolonged period of instability and conflict in the MENA-region. Every single one of these poses significant – and to a large extent new – challenges to Western policy-makers. Taken together, they signal an urgent need for a more creative approach to defense and security policy. HCSS continues to believe that, in support of this, our security and defense organizations require a persistent, balanced, and evidence-based strategic anticipation capability.

1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In the last major defense review (the *Verkenningen*),[1] the Dutch government came to the broadly shared conclusion that its defense and security efforts required a better strategic anticipatory ability, which was, for the first time, acknowledged as a 'strategic (government) function'. This conclusion led to the development of an interdepartmental Strategic Monitor, to which various public and private actors were invited to contribute. These contributions in turn provide analytical inputs to the respective strategy and policy processes of the Dutch Ministries of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Security & Justice. They are not intended to predict the future. But they are expected to enhance our collective understanding of key trends, developments and possible shocks in the security environment and their potential impact on the security interests of the Netherlands and its partners.

HCSS contributions to this process build on our broader strategic foresight efforts. One of the key hallmarks of the HCSS approach is our profound conviction that strategic orientation under complexity[2] requires looking at the future from different 'angles': different cultural and linguistic perspectives, different methodological approaches, different academic disciplines, different time-horizons, different types of data and sources, different levels of granularity, even different epistemological perspectives. We are developing a 'futurebase', a broad (online) knowledgebase with various insights about the future culled from all of these different perspectives. The purpose of this 'futurebase' is not to reduce all of those insights to some lowest common denominator, but to allow various public and private security actors to interactively explore the full riches of these multiple futures in order to test the robustness of their own strategic portfolio and to develop new solutions for different parts of the broader, multi-dimensional future-space.

Based on this broader effort, HCSS contributions to the Strategic Monitor consist of four different 'products', all of which are results of the persistent effort that we just described:

- **methodological** products,
- regular reports containing a broad **horizon-scan** of recent strategic developments;
- follow-up **in-depth investigations** into selected issues of concern; and
- our '**futurebase'**, an online platform in which insights from the various perspectives, methods, data-sources, etc. can be interactively consulted by public and private actors (under construction).

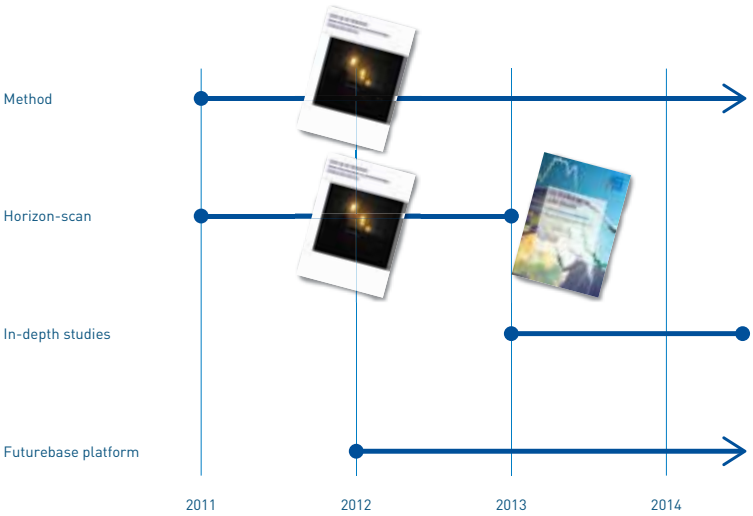


FIGURE 1.1: HCSS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE INTERDEPARTMENTAL STRATEGIC MONITOR

Our 2011 report[3] presented our broad programmatic view of strategic (meta-)foresight for defense and security. It explained why we think strategic foresight has to be done in a multi-perspective way and then proceeded to describe, develop and apply seven different 'perspectives' to illustrate the approach. It concluded with an appeal for a different approach towards strategic orientation. For our 2012 report[4], the three departments that are responsible for the strategic monitor requested HCSS to further develop three particular perspectives (GeoRisQ, events-based analysis, and multilingual analysis) and to apply those to a broad horizon-scan of developments in the preceding year. In 2013, a decision was made to alternate between broad horizon-scans (as in 2011 and 2012) and deeper exploratory studies in topics that are selected

from key issues that emerged from the horizon-scan in the previous year and that are of special interest to the departments. The current report, which covers the 2013-14 cycle of the HCSS Strategic Monitor, is an example of the latter. In four separate sub-studies four topics that stood out in previous year's broad horizon scan are elaborated in four separate studies, brought together in this report.

Study I: **Great Power Assertiveness**. Great powers have a quality of their own. Power, especially military power, is not distributed equally among all states, a fact that has not changed since the end of the Cold War. Great powers, through the sheer size of their power base, have historically to a great measure determined war and peace in the world. The future of great power relations thus is of vital importance to global peace and stability. In recent years, there has been much talk about increased assertiveness of China and Russia. As we concluded in last year's *HCSS Strategic Monitor*: "the 'Recent Events' perspective reflects the growing assertiveness of China (manifest) and Russia." Cases in point include China's (perceived) saber rattling in the South China Sea and Russia's use of its resources as a coercive tool in relations with its neighbors. And of course, the current Crimea crisis is an obvious manifestation of brinkmanship by one great power, Russia (besides also illustrating the important role of pivot states). The real question though is whether such events illustrate a broader trend toward greater friction, or are instead part and parcel of everyday international affairs. This study assesses that issue.

Study II: **Pivot States**. Conflict over overlapping spheres of interest of great powers are more likely to occur in times of changing power configurations, whether globally or regionally. In addition to direct military confrontation, competition over other, more subtle, areas of great power influence may occur. Under these conditions, states that find themselves in overlapping spheres of interest are focal points of where great power interests collide and may clash. A state moving from one great power's sphere of influence into another can be extremely destabilizing, with a great risk of escalation. From Armenia to Afghanistan, from Iran to Indonesia, from Serbia to Syria: states located at the seams of the international system have at various moments in history been crucial to the security and stability of the international system. We call such states pivot states. In this study we elaborate on that notion and describe the pivot states we see present in the current world order.

Study III: **Non-state Actors**. In today's globalized and multipolar world, non-state actors play a key role in national and international security. Non-state actors include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), but equally so multinational corporations, private military organizations, media outlets, terrorist groups, organized ethnic groups, academic institutions, lobby groups, criminal organizations, labor unions or social movements, and others. This wide range of non-state actors also indicates a variety of ways in which they may influence international affairs. Some contribute positively to security and stability whereas others actively undermine it. Last year's HCSS Strategic Monitor concluded that "the state is back with a vengeance, both at the international and the national level. The steady rise of non-state actors over the last few decades, and the associated diffusion of power, is in recent years matched by a greater profiling of state actors." At the same time, it is clear that foreign and security policy must take into account the role of non-state actors. Therefore, this study aims to develop a clearer view on the roles and influence of non-state actors. In particular, we elaborate on the interaction between state and non-state actors, based on our understanding that the relative power and influence of state and non-state actors cannot so easily be captured in generic terms; and certainly should not be considered as 'zero sum'.

Study IV: **Instability in the MENA Region**. The number and intensity of inter- and intrastate conflict has dropped dramatically since the end of the Cold War. This global downward trend is somewhat reversed in recent years, due to an increase in conflicts on the fringes of Europe, in particular in North Africa and the Middle East (the MENA region). This is of direct concern to European states, because destabilization and conflict may affect our own security and prosperity. The current turmoil offers opportunities as well as threats. Conflicts may in the end lead to more stable, prosperous and free societies. In the long run, this will generate economic opportunities for European nations too. Many European countries have historical ties with countries in the region, and are well placed to wield their political, economic and military instruments to help shape regional stability. In this study, we will elaborate the vulnerability of the countries in the MENA region to specific types of conflict and assess the security implications for Europe.

We close off with some **Final Considerations** in which we relate the conclusions of the four sub studies – which are principally stand-alone conclusions within the context of the particular topic covered – to the main conclusions of last year's broad horizon scan.

2 ASSESSING ASSERTIONS OF ASSERTIVENESS: THE CHINESE AND RUSSIAN CASES

2 ASSESSING ASSERTIONS OF ASSERTIVENESS: THE CHINESE AND RUSSIAN CASES

Stephan De Spiegeleire, Eline Chivot, João Silveira, Michelle Yuemin Yang, and Olga Zelinska

2.1 Preface

The events – still unfolding as these words are written – that shook up Ukraine, Europe and the world in the first months of 2014, came as a shock to most Western policymakers. They were not exactly a bolt out of the blue. Russia's relationship with the West had been deteriorating for quite some time. But the 2014 Crimean Blitzanschluss suggests a readiness by one of the nuclear great powers to take risks that many in the West would have thought implausible just a short while ago. Similar surprise is also often voiced over China's increased willingness to assert its interests in the international arena. International relations experts often use the term 'brinkmanship' for this type of behavior: the practice of pushing dangerous events to the brink[1] (hence the name) of disaster in order to achieve the most advantageous outcome.

This study sets out to take a closer and more systematic look at the phenomenon of great power assertiveness. It starts out by exploring why great powers matter so much in international relations and what assertiveness actually is. It then goes on to examine the available evidence for two great powers that have been making headlines with what some see as unprecedented assertiveness: China and Russia (see Box – Why only China and Russia?). All too often, such claims remain restricted to anecdotal skirmishes. Scholars who claim that a certain country has become more assertive will adduce a number of events that they claim support their case. Scholars who disagree with the claim will then counter by offering different hand-picked events or alternative explanations for the mentioned ones. But all of this evidence is typically limited in time (which makes it hard to assess whether alleged 'new' trends are genuinely new or just a return to a historical norm) and scope (e.g., it often only includes confirming

evidence, and excludes disconfirming evidence like non-assertive evidence that may balance out the assertive evidence, or the 'counter-evidence' of facts that one might have expected to happen if countries were really assertive, but that did not[2]). We therefore made an – to the best of our knowledge unprecedented – effort to draw upon a larger and more diverse evidence-base in order to ascertain whether China and Russia have in fact become more assertive. The greater part of this paper will be devoted to the factual and rhetorical evidence. The paper will conclude with some security implications.

Why only China and Russia?

This is not a self-evident choice. Our research has shown that the US is far more associated with assertiveness in the scholarly literature than, for instance, either China or Russia (Figure 2.1). We suspect that an analysis of the global media or other indicators would produce a similar finding.

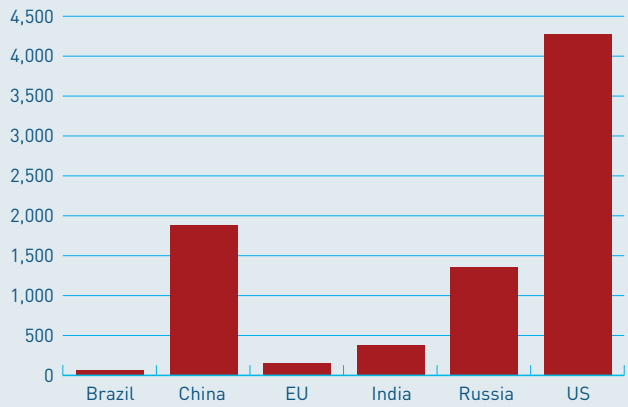


FIGURE 2.1: GREAT POWER ASSERTIVENESS (ACADEMIC SEARCH RESULTS)

However, given the scope of this project, HCSS, in close consultation with the three Ministries that commissioned this research, decided to confine this analysis to China and Russia. There can be no doubt about these two countries' current importance to the international system. They are the world's largest countries in terms of land area. Both have historically been participants in Great Power wars, especially Russia, which has been involved in fewer wars than France, England or Austro-Hungary, but in far more than countries like Germany or Sweden.

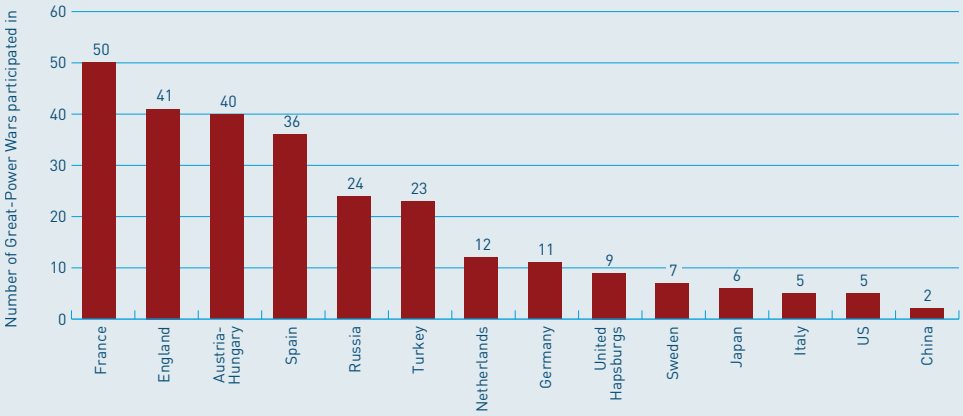


FIGURE 2.2: GREAT POWER PARTICIPATION IN GREAT POWER WAR 1495-2014[3]

Both are members of the UN Security Council, and both are nuclear powers. Both appear increasingly willing to challenge the United States – also in military terms – as illustrated by a few recent high-profile cases. These include Russia's talk in 2013 about dispatching fighter detachments to Belarus, Iskander short-range missiles to Kaliningrad, or more military forces to the Arctic[4] as well as arguably quite bold actions in 2013 such as dispatching a military naval warship off the coast of Scotland, running the largest-scale military field-exercise since a long time with its Belarusian ally (Zapad-2013), flying bombers over NATO (including Dutch) airspace and even simulating an aerial attack on Southern Sweden, etc. On China's side, such cases include, for example, the Chinese declaration of an air defense identification zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea, the incorporation of the South China Sea in passport maps of China, the dispatching of their new aircraft carrier Liaoning further afield to Hainan island (leading to a near-collision with a US warship), and the test of a hypersonic missile capable of evading American missile defenses.[5]

2.2 Why Great Powers Matter More

Great powers still have a quality of their own.[6] Power, especially military power, is not distributed equally among all states, as shown in Figure 2.3 (the size of the rectangles represents how much money countries spent on defense in 2012. (Expenditure is in constant 2011 US dollar).

FIGURE 2.3 TREEMAP OF WORLD MILITARY EXPENDITURES 2012[7]

Figure 2.3 clearly shows how unevenly military power is distributed in the world today – a statistic that has not changed since the end of the Cold War. HCSS has computed an indicator that is sometimes used to express inequality in economic data like income distribution (the Gini-coefficient), but that we applied to the global distribution of military expenditures. This statistic shows the military Gini-coefficient hovering around the .9 mark since the end of the Cold War,[8] i.e., very close to '1' which would mean total inequality (one power spending 100% and other countries nothing).

But whereas global military inequality has not changed, the distribution between the great powers certainly has. We can see this in more detail in Figure 2.4, which represents – based on the same data as Figure 2.3 – the shares of global military spending accounted for by China and Russia,[9] the two major powers this report will focus on. It also adds the United States and the European Union for comparison.[10]

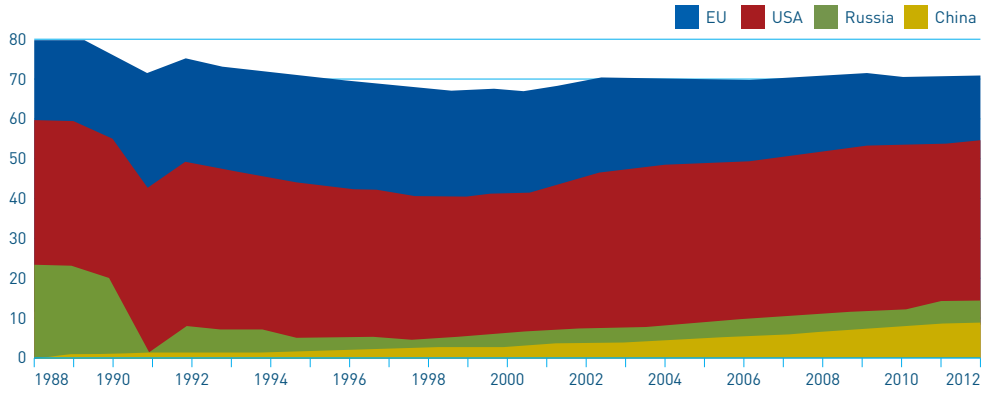


FIGURE 2.4: SHARE (%) OF GLOBAL MILITARY SPENDING IN CHINA, USSR/RUSSIA, THE US AND THE EU BETWEEN 1988 AND 2012[11]

We note that the US share has hovered quite consistently around 35-40% throughout the entire selected period. The share of USSR/Russia went down dramatically from 24% to 2% towards the end of the Yeltsin-period (1999).[12] It has since then crawled back to 5%. The biggest change is in the Chinese (going from under 1% in 1988 to 10% in 2012 – a tenfold increase) and EU figures (declining steadily from 36% in 1989 – then on par with the US – to 16% in 2012).

Not only do great powers possess disproportional power – as illustrated here in military terms – they also wield it disproportionally. The historical record shows that they tend to participate more in militarized conflict,[13] to impose more economic sanctions,[14] to possess more nuclear weapons,[15] to form more military alliances[16] and to mediate[17] or intervene[18] more in civil and international conflicts. A recent paper summarizes scholars' findings on this issue: "Overall, major powers are more active internationally, engaging in more foreign policy behaviors that influence the behavior of other states and the way in which the international system functions".[19]

And yet, despite this evidence that the world is, to paraphrase the singer James Brown, not just a 'man's world', but a 'great powers' world', the world has not witnessed a single great power war since the end of the Korean War. Historically, great powers have engaged in war with each other at regular intervals – often with enormously deleterious consequences in economic and human terms.

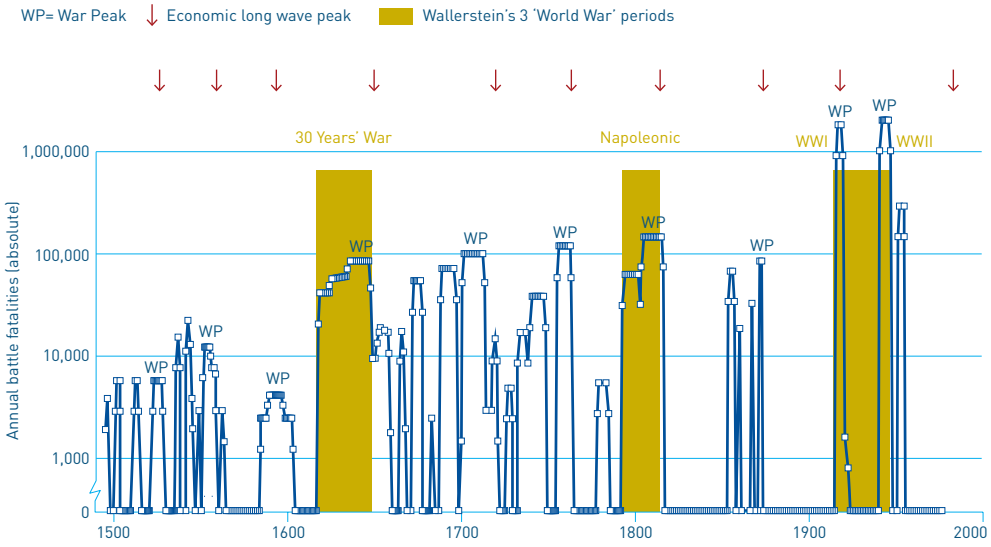


FIGURE 2.5: GREAT POWER WAR SEVERITY, 1495-1975[20]

The world came close to yet another great power conflagration on a number of occasions during the Cold War. But – whether due to the nuclear condition or to other reasons – it always managed to avoid any overt collisions escalating into anything resembling the two world wars or any great power wars before that. The Korean War (1950-1953) was the last time that two or more great powers directly faced each other in a sustained armed conflict.[21] So great power war in that sense appears to mirror the decline in the overall amount of violence in the world that has been documented by Harvard psychologist Steven Pinker and others.[22]

But what does this trend bode for the future? Some scholars extrapolate a bright future. John Mueller's view is that major war has become "subrationally unthinkable," that is, something that "never percolates into [states'] consciousness" as a possible option.[23] Mueller maintained in *Retreat from Doomsday* that World War I "was a watershed event," which undermined the image of war as "glorious, manly, and beneficial."[24] Since then, war has gradually come to be viewed with "ridicule rather than fear" in the developed world.[25] Christopher Fettweis argues vigorously in *Dangerous Times?* that the future will be "free of major war" and will also see a "decrease in balancing behavior, proliferation, and overall levels of conflict across the world."[26] He urges theorists and policymakers to grasp the implications of a "golden age of peace and security."[27]

Others remain gloomier. Richard Rosecrance points out that "since 1500 there have been thirteen cases of one Great Power approaching or passing a hegemonic leader in economic or military terms. Of these, all but three ended in major war."[28] Nassim Taleb, the now famous author of *The Black Swan* (2007), argues that Pinker's statistical trends do not exclude the possibility of a one-off catastrophic conflagration.[29] 'Realist' scholars like Colin Gray even talk about the possibility of 'another bloody century'.[30]

There is no debate about the fact that great power war has been of enormous importance in the past. With respect to the future, there is no such consensus. Joshua Goldstein recently conceded in a piece written for the National Intelligence Council's latest major foresight study *Global Trends 2030*: "[i]n my opinion we just do not understand war and international relations well enough to predict anything twenty years into the future."[31] A fair way to sum up the debate, may be to say that many authors seem to agree that the likelihood of great power war may have diminished, but that its future re-occurrence cannot just be assumed away. If it is true that great power assertiveness has increased – as much anecdotal evidence seems to suggest – and that the world has thus come closer to a possible abrupt break in the Long Peace, then policymakers in all countries, great and small, should take heed.

2.3 What is Assertiveness?

In Other Disciplines

Assertiveness is a term that became popular in the 1970s, especially in the fields of psychology and of communication.

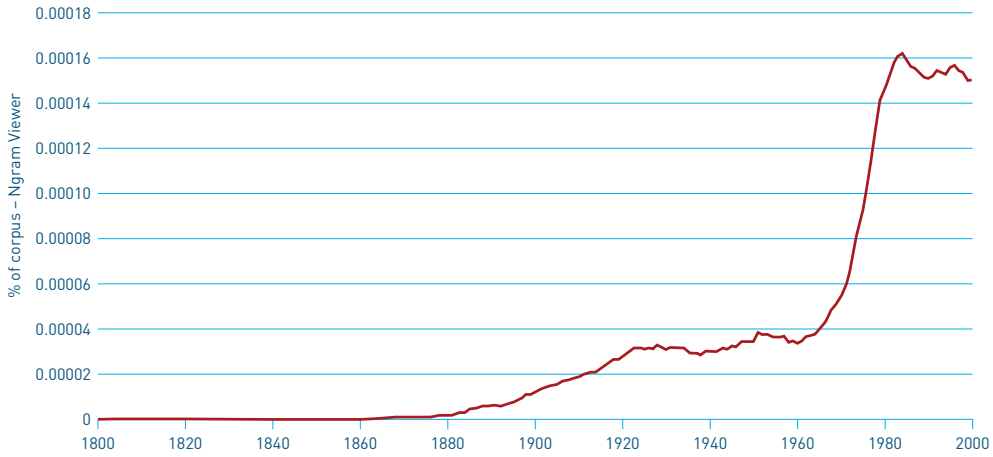


FIGURE 2.6: OCCURRENCE OF THE WORD 'ASSERTIVENESS' IN GOOGLE BOOK CORPORA[32]

It is typically positioned between 'passive' and 'aggressive' behavior or communication. Behavioral psychologists, for instance, talk about four major personality/communication types: ***aggressive***, in which an actor infringes upon the rights of others; ***passive***, in which a person essentially allows others to violate his/her own rights; ***assertive***, in which an actor respects both his/her own rights and those of others; and also ***passive-aggressive***, in which someone is essentially being aggressive but in a passive or indirect way (e.g., someone may be angry but not act in an overtly aggressive way by yelling or hitting, but still signaling displeasure by sulking or slamming a door). We take away two important points from this: 1) that there is both a **communicative (rhetorical)** side to assertiveness and an **attitudinal (factual)** side; and 2) that assertiveness is not the same as aggressiveness, and that it can have both a positive and a negative association (see Figure 2.7).

FIGURE 2.7: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ASSERTIVE, PASSIVE AND AGGRESSIVE

In International Relations

In international relations, the concept has not been the subject of much in-depth scholarly inquiry, although it has been used discursively – and much more so in the 'applied' than in the theoretical literature. And in the more applied policy debates it can be found back in both a **positive** sense of constructive activism (e.g., "Germany is not pulling its weight in international affairs and should become more assertive") and in a **negative** sense ("China is behaving increasingly assertively"). The term does appear to be used more frequently in the negative sense.

The one explicit attempt at providing a formal definition that we were able to identify in the literature was by Harvard China-scholar Alastair Iain Johnston, who described assertiveness as a "form of assertive diplomacy that explicitly threatens to impose costs on another actor that are clearly higher than before" e.g., "if you sell weapons to Taiwan, we will harm you in much more costly ways than before"; or "if you let the Dalai Lama visit, the costs for you will be substantially greater than before".[33] Whereas we instinctively agree with the main elements of this definition (i.e., that it deals with

the interactions between countries, that there is an element of threat, and that there also has to be some escalation in that threat), there are two elements that we feel less comfortable about. The first one is the definition's sole focus on 'costs'. Some forms of verbal assertiveness – "we are 'better' (/'more Christian', /'less aggressive'/, etc.) than others", for instance – may not really impose costs on other countries, but may still be perceived as (and represent) assertiveness. Secondly, we miss a reference to 'power', which we feel plays an important role in international assertiveness.

Our own definition of assertiveness is therefore based on **power** instead of on costs. We differentiate between different aspects of 'national' power: the power a country intrinsically possesses (however one wishes to define that), the power it is willing and able to manifest through concrete actions (factual), the power it professes rhetorically and the power that is perceived by other countries (see Figure 2.8).

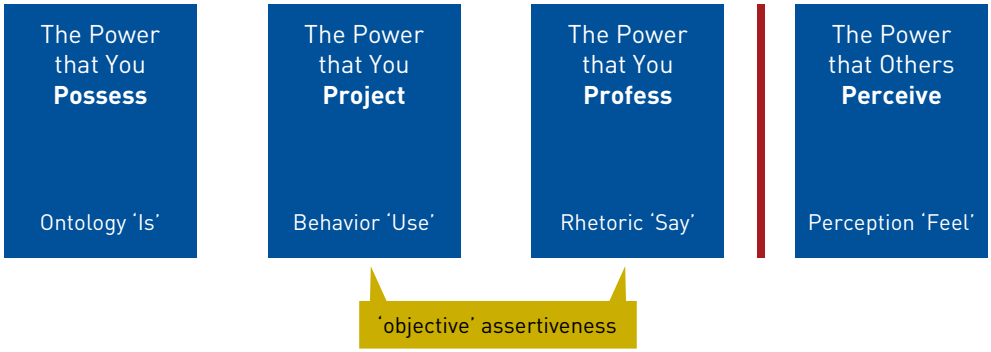


FIGURE 2.8: DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF POWER

It is clear that these different aspects of power are to a large degree distinct from one another. A country can have significant 'latent' power that it could actualize but may decide not to. The case of Germany's international stance in security affairs might once again serve as an example. Other countries may try to project far more international power than they actually possess, arguably as in the case of North Korea. And the perception of a country's power by third countries can vary widely – sometimes even entirely unrelated to any of the other three aspects of power.

Therefore, we define 'assertiveness' as an increase in any of the three aspects of power to the right of Figure 2.8: in power projection, power assertions or in the perception of these first two by others. The two middle ones – the power a country

projects and the power it professes – we define as 'objective' assertiveness, as in those cases where a country demonstrably changes its behavior or rhetoric. And the way in which any action or rhetoric (even if it has not changed) is perceived by third countries, we define as 'subjective' assertiveness.

This study differentiates between two types of assertiveness: 'objective' and 'subjective'. We define 'objective' assertiveness as any increase in at least one of the following two aspects of 'power': the power an actor manifests through its actions (factual assertiveness) and the power it rhetorically claims to possess (rhetorical assertiveness). Under 'subjective assertiveness' we understand situations where an actor is perceived by others – whether or not based on objectively observable realities – to have increased its either factual or rhetorical assertiveness.

In this report, we focus our attention on the two middle 'objective' pillars as shown in Figure 2.8: the rhetorical and the factual types of assertiveness. We recognize that this excludes an important dimension of assertiveness, which like so many other things, lies very much in the eye of the beholder. But as previously mentioned, one of the main goals for this report was to develop ways to get a better evidentiary grip on the phenomenon of assertiveness, which is why we decided to start with those elements that at least some evidence can be found for.

2.4 Research Design

The ambition of this study is to extend both the scope (beyond anecdotal cherry-picking) and the time coverage (looking back more than just a few months or years) of the evidence base that can be used to assess countries' assertiveness. In order to analyze both the rhetorical and the behavioral dimensions of China's and Russia's alleged assertiveness, we used different sources, methods and tools. These will be briefly introduced.[34]

For the analysis of the **rhetorical side of assertiveness**, we used three main tools:

- The first one is **GDELT**, the open-source Global Database of Events, Language, and Tone that was first released in 2013. It covers millions of full-text newspaper articles published since 1979 and applies various coding and natural language processing tools to them in order to automatically extract events (almost half a

billion categorized events, with 120.000 being added daily), actors, geographical locations and 'tone' (negative/positive). For example, if an article contains the line "Sudanese students and police fought in the Egyptian capital" it codes the event as "SUDEDU fought COP". Next, the system finds the nearest mention of a city or locality in the text – in this case Cairo – and adds its latitude and longitude to the event data. One of the important coding distinctions GDELT provides is between 'verbal' and 'material' instances of either cooperation or conflict. The HCSS team thus was able to identify the codes that could be classified as 'assertive' and to examine those events that involved China and Russia and were coded as evidence for rhetorical assertiveness.[35]

- The second one is the **HCSS Off-Base**[36] which contains all webpages of the official websites of (so far only) the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of 7 important powers, including China and Russia. These websites represent one the most authoritative (and in our opinion underexplored) sources for foreign policy analysis, as they reflect how countries want to present their foreign policy positions to the rest of the world. The HCSS team also applied a number of mostly open-source software tools to extract the main topics from those websites and to zoom in on those N-grams (single words or combinations of 2 or 3 words) that are associated with 'assertiveness'. We first identified 'baskets' of expressions (e.g., "China demands") that seemed to clearly zoom in on those countries' own assertiveness (and not that of others) and then identified all N-grams that co-occurred within two sentences of the occurrence of any part of that basket (i.e., in two sentences before and after the sentence in which the term "China demands" occurs).

- We also scanned all **scholarly articles** contained in EBSCO,[37] the world's largest electronic collection, and published in 2013, in search for any pieces of evidence that were adduced by scholars to prove (or disprove) allegations of assertiveness, be they rhetorical or factual. Academic English-language articles were selected with similar search queries for both China and Russia and were then examined manually by HCSS analysts.

For the **factual evidence**, HCSS also used a different mix of three approaches:

- We used the **GDELT-events** (see above) involving China and Russia and having been coded in GDELT as 'material'.
- Like we did for the analysis of rhetorical assertiveness, we also scanned the relevant **scholarly articles** of the past year in search for the concrete events that were used to illustrate assertions (or denials) of assertiveness; and finally
- We also collected some **numerical data** that could be used as proxies to reflect the two countries' assertiveness in the diplomatic, informational, military and economic domains.

Since much use was made of (manual and automated) coding, we developed a consistent coding scheme based on three elements:

- whether an event was positive/neutral or negative (its tone);
- whether it was rhetorical or factual (its level); and
- whether it was of a diplomatic, economic or military nature (its type or category).

POSITIVE / NEUTRAL				NEGATIVE			
Levels of Assertiveness	Type of assertiveness		Grand Category	Levels of Assertiveness	Type of assertiveness		Grand Category
1	Rhetorical	Positive/ Neutral	Diplomatic	-1	Rhetorical	Negative	Diplomatic
2			Economic	-2			Economic
3			Military	-3			Military
4	Factual	Positive/ Neutral	Diplomatic	-4	Factual	Negative	Diplomatic
5			Economic	-5			Economic
6			Military	-6			Military

FIGURE 2.9: ASSERTIVENESS CODING SCHEME

The list of GDELT codes and how they were recoded for this project are available upon request. But to give a few examples:

- "Threaten to reduce or break relations" was coded as a rhetorical ("threaten") negative ("reduce or break relations") diplomatic (as it did not – necessarily – imply specific economic or military action);
- "Demand military cooperation" was coded as rhetorical ("demand") negative ("demand") military ("military cooperation");
- "Express intent to settle dispute" was coded as rhetorical ("express") positive or neutral ("settle dispute") diplomatic (no specific economic or military connotation); and
- "Provide military aid" as positive/neutral ("provide aid") military ("military aid") factual ("concrete action").

The next section will present the findings of those different research streams.

2.5 Main Findings

The main findings of our analysis will be presented based on the sources and methods that were used. We will start with the events (GDELT/recoding), will then move to the official websites (Off-Base/N-gram analysis); then to the scholarly literature (academic journals/traditional expert analysis) and then finally to some numerical data (various data sources/statistics). A synoptic overview of all findings can be found in the first part of the conclusions.

What Do the (Automatically Extracted) Events Tell Us? GDELT

China

Overall Trends

GDELT data for China show a steady rise by about 50% in total Chinese assertiveness since 1980, with the highest peak in 1984, markedly less oscillation (and so more consistency in assertiveness) since about 2000, and then again a marked upturn since 2003. When we focus on the more recent period, most peaks have occurred between 2007 and 2012.[38] Around 2007 and 2008, we observe a number of peaks that could be explained by China's increased assertiveness with the growing financial and economic crisis that hit the West, but also by military events such as the anti-satellite missile test on January 11th, 2007, and diplomatic events, such as China's bilateral economic pressure exerted on North Korea. In early 2007, China also sent a number of Chinese military engineers to Darfur in a move that triggered much Western attention (see

Figure 2.10 showing the types of assertiveness; there is a similar military peak in January that same year).

Overall assertiveness continued to rise between 2009 and 2013, with somewhat weaker but more frequent peaks. This occurred particularly in late 2009 (e.g., the number of Vietnamese fishing vessels apprehended by China increased in the Paracel Islands) and in the first months of 2010. For instance, China issued a statement in January to remind the world of its "indisputable sovereignty over the islands of the South China Sea and the adjacent waters".[39]

The assertiveness figure remains high throughout 2012-2013, the years in which China brought an aircraft carrier into the navy, allowed anti-Japanese protests in Chinese cities, and took a strong stance on the territorial claims of its neighbors: Taiwan, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

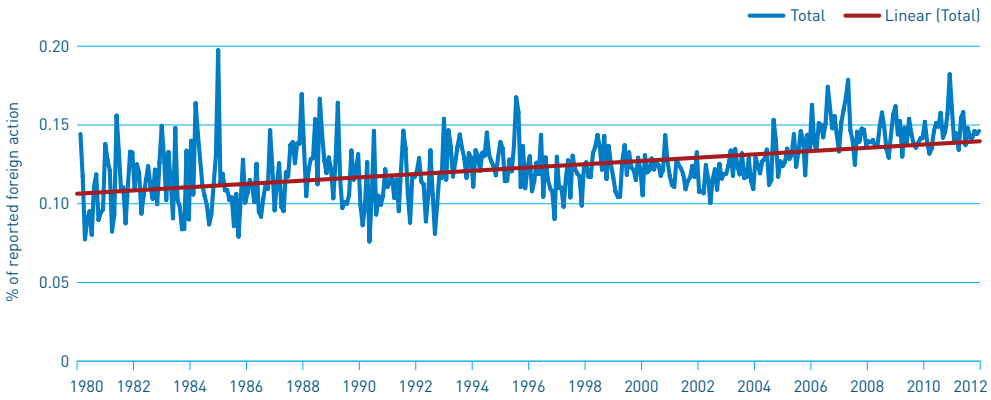


FIGURE 2.10: TOTAL CHINESE ASSERTIVENESS IN % OF REPORTED TOTAL FOR FOREIGN ACTION, 01/1980 – 08/2013. 'TOTAL' EQUALS BOTH RHETORIC AND FACTUAL EVENTS. 'LINEAR' IS THE TRENDLINE.[40]

Different Types

Looking at the three different categories of assertiveness, namely diplomatic, economic, and military (as shown in Figure 2.11 below), and for the purpose of this study and a more detailed picture, zooming in on the last ten years, we observe that since 2003 China's assertiveness has been mostly of the diplomatic type. But all three types of assertiveness are rising, with the economic one most rapidly and the military one less so.

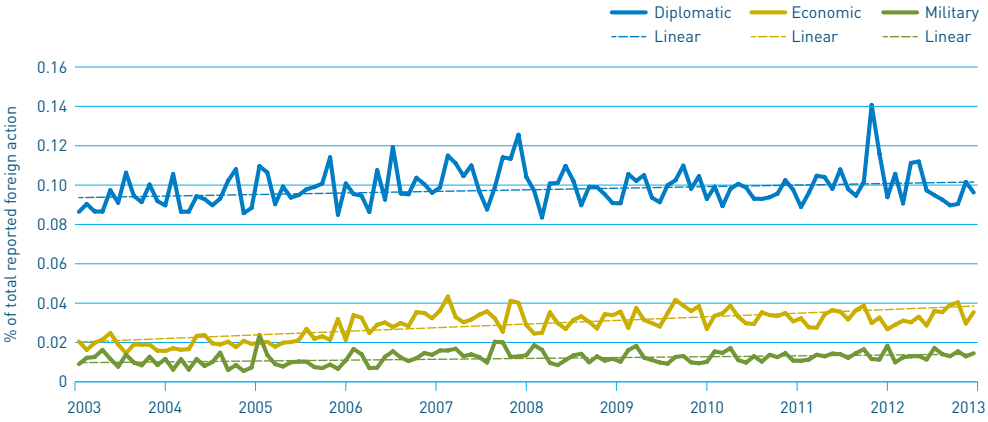


FIGURE 2.11: TYPES OF CHINESE ASSERTIVENESS IN % OF REPORTED TOTAL FOR FOREIGN ACTION, 09/2003 – 08/2013

The **'diplomatic type' of assertiveness** started at a much higher level than the other two and kept rising over time, with many peaks each year from 2006 onwards. Excluding the hike in January 2012, some stabilization can be observed since 2008. Two important peaks are identified around August 2007 and May 2008. They can be associated with a rising activism of China in asserting territorial claims in the South China Sea.

Both economic and military assertiveness have increased more strongly over time than the diplomatic type, but they have not fully caught up. Data for **economic assertiveness** reveal a steep increase between 2006 and 2008 (with a peak in May and September 2008 at the heart of the economic crisis), before first stabilizing somewhat and then increasing again ever since. Another spike appears in 2010, as China overtakes Japan as the world's second biggest economy.

These tensions correspond to the period where new **'military' peaks** occurred – throughout 2008, as well as around September 2009, September 2010 and May 2012.

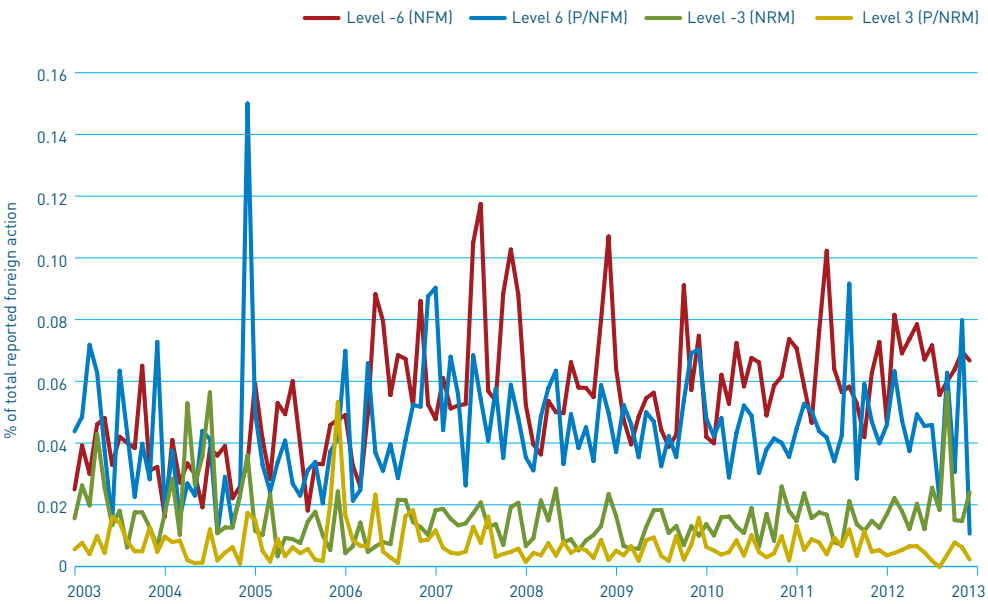


FIGURE 2.12: LEVELS AND TONES OF CHINESE MILITARY ASSERTIVENESS IN % OF REPORTED TOTAL FOR FOREIGN ACTION, 09/2003 – 08/2013. P/NRM: POSITIVE OR NEUTRAL RHETORICAL MILITARY ASSERTIVENESS; P/NFM: POSITIVE OR NEUTRAL FACTUAL MILITARY ASSERTIVENESS; NRM: NEGATIVE RHETORICAL MILITARY ASSERTIVENESS; NFM: NEGATIVE FACTUAL MILITARY ASSERTIVENESS

Military Assertiveness: Levels and Trends

Across China's levels of military assertiveness, there is a **growing gap between factual (red and blue) and rhetorical (green and taupe)** military assertiveness. This suggests an increasing discrepancy between what is being said and what is being done in reality: even if China may not talk the talk, it does seem to be walking the walk of military assertiveness. If we zoom in on the **positive or neutral** military assertiveness, we see that the factual subtype (blue) scores much higher than the rhetorical one (the taupe – virtually consistently the lowest). The same is true for the **negative subtypes**, where the factual (red – currently the highest) type is also consistently higher than the rhetorical one (green). The most striking finding here is the steep increase (almost doubling) in actual negative military behavior, which certainly appears to confirm the many claims that have recently been made in this regard.

Positive, neutral, or negative **factual types (red and blue)** of military assertiveness are generally more observed than the rhetorical types. The positive/neutral factual

(blue) type strongly peaks in the second half of 2005, around August and September – during the first Sino-Russian military exercise Peace Mission 2005, and the visit of US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. The **negative (factual) military events (red)** tend to dominate all other trends. However, its peaks are frequent and quite high in terms of score. They occurred particularly in early 2007, around February and March 2008, in the second half of 2009 (July and August), the second half of 2010 (June to August), and the first few months of 2012.

Russia

Overall Trends

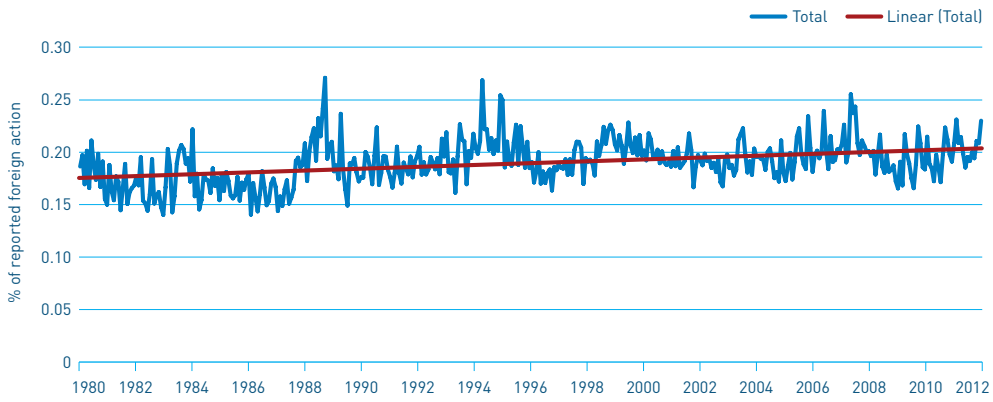


FIGURE 2.13: TOTAL RUSSIAN ASSERTIVENESS IN % OF REPORTED TOTAL FOR FOREIGN ACTION, 01/1980 – 08/2013

Since 1980, Russian assertiveness has been steadily rising (though less than Chinese) by about 20% – and it is at a higher level today than it was in the late Soviet period under Gorbachev. This rise, however, is much less pronounced than in the Chinese case, with even a period of overall stabilization and slight decline from the end of the 1990s until 2005/6 (late Yeltsin, early Putin years). Since 2005 we once again observe more oscillation with a few peaks.

The highest peak occurred in 1989, which can be easily explained by the events that marked the fall of the USSR and the end of the Cold War. The data suggest that there had been more frequent peaks and more irregular oscillations over the years during which Yeltsin was in power (1991-2000) than after that. This is indeed a sober reminder of the often tense relations between Russia and the West even during the Yeltsin years, which is all too often portrayed in overly rosy terms. The two main peaks we

see in this period occurred in September 1994 and August 1995, corresponding to the first Chechen War and the continued Russian military offensive.

The last years of the Yeltsin period were characterized by a somewhat declining assertiveness, which only regained – but did not really exceed – its previous level under President Putin's first two terms in office. President Medvedev's term started with the biggest spike during the war against Georgia in August 2008, but then declined to late-Yeltsin levels. Since President Putin's return to power in 2012, we once again see a marked increase (but we point out that our data stopped in August 2013 and that many of the data points that are used in the press and the specialized literature today postdate this period).

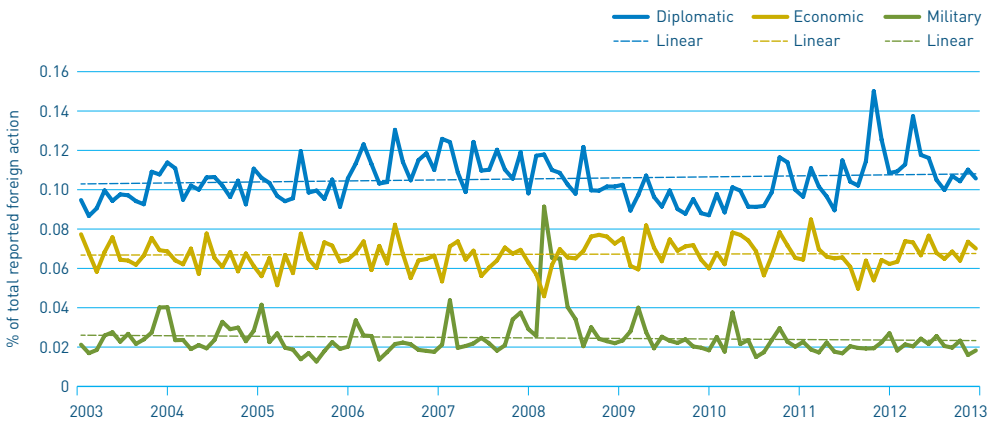


FIGURE 2.14: TYPES OF RUSSIAN ASSERTIVENESS IN % OF REPORTED TOTAL FOR FOREIGN ACTION, 09/2003 – 08/2013

When we then zoom in onto the different types of assertiveness, the Russian data appear to show a more balanced distribution than the Chinese. Although the overall pegging order (first diplomatic, then economic, then military) remains identical, the gaps between them are different. The '**diplomatic type**' is the one that experiences the strongest increase over time. The '**economic type**' rises as well, particularly between September 2008 and August 2011, though this increase remains modest and less pronounced compared to the diplomatic rise. Economic peaks are only arising significantly in January 2007, in the second half of 2009, and in August 2011. And interestingly enough, the '**military type**' is the least important one and has been slightly decreasing since 2003.

The first two Putin administrations (2000-2008) are marked by an increase in the overall assertiveness, which remains limited, but had been standing out by the number of peaks and a greater intensity in terms of oscillation since January 2006.

The years 2007 and 2008 witnessed a new increase in Russia's overall assertiveness, particularly in January 2007 (the Russia-Belarus energy dispute), September 2007 (the expedition to the Arctic, the ambush of Russian troops in Chechnya, etc.), and August 2008, which corresponds to an impressive 'military' peak too (the Russo-Georgian war). Interestingly, there is a strong peak as Medvedev takes over the Presidency in May 2008 (overall), which coincides with the highest 'military' peaks as well. These 'military episodes' occurred in August 2008 (as mentioned), July 2009 (the Sino-Russian exercise Peace Mission 2009 and the launch of Russia's new submarine-launched ballistic missile), and in the second half of 2010 (the publication of the Russian Military and Defense Doctrine).

After a rather steep decline through 2010, a new rise in overall assertiveness can be identified. This rise further accelerates after Putin once more assumed office as President in 2012. Interestingly enough, the 'military type' of assertiveness follows a downward trend from 2009 until August 2013.

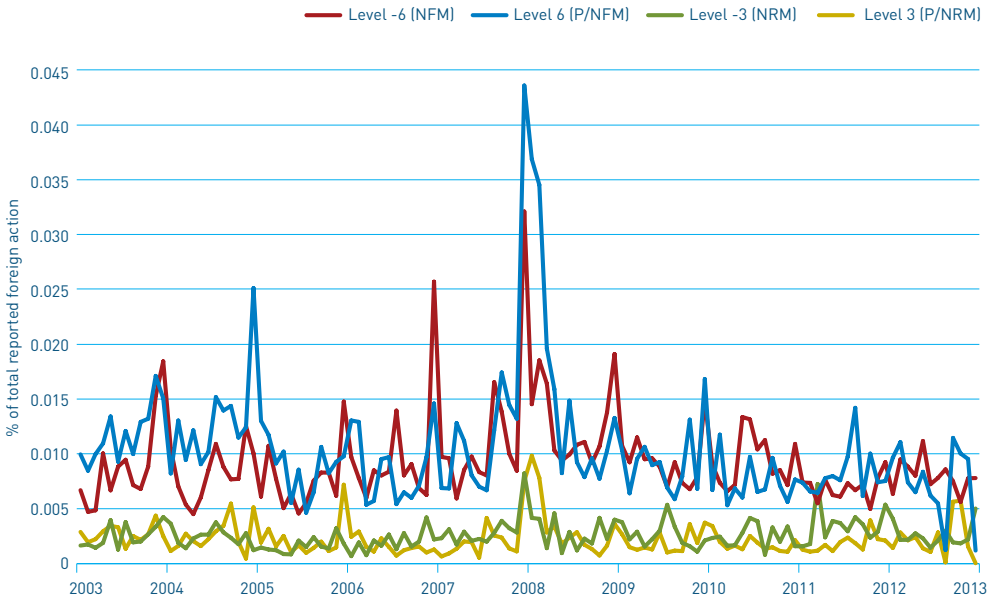


FIGURE 2.15: LEVELS AND TONES OF RUSSIAN MILITARY ASSERTIVENESS IN % OF REPORTED TOTAL FOR FOREIGN ACTION, 09/2003 – 08/2013

Military Assertiveness: Levels and Trends

Similarly to the Chinese dataset, GDELT identified fewer Russian **rhetorical** military assertive events than it did **factual** ones. Russia too seems to talk softer than it acts (even if the discrepancy is smaller than in the Chinese case and is also declining). **Factual military assertiveness** (red and blue) is however much more pronounced across the entire period, with a slightly more marked presence of the positive/neutral type (blue) overall, although its decline is larger than the small increase in negative factual assertiveness (red). Both tend to experience peaks simultaneously: around September 2004, September 2006, September 2007, September 2008, September 2009, and September 2010. On some occasions, the negative factual assertiveness was stronger that the positive/neutral one (in 2004, 2006, 2007, 2009 and 2010). But contrary to the Chinese case, there is little to suggest an overall dominance of positive/neutral rhetoric over the negative one, or vice-versa.

Cross-Country Comparison

A first important observation is that the overall levels for Russia's assertiveness remain higher than the Chinese ones. In 1990, Russia started at about twice the level of China's assertiveness. In the decades since then, China has been closing that gap – especially in the past 5 years. But it still remains below Russia.

Both countries' assertiveness is mostly expressed in the diplomatic arena, where their figures are very close to each other. In the economic arena, Russia appears to be a lot more assertive than China, although China saw a bigger increase – especially in the 2006-2007 period. Militarily speaking, Russia again scores somewhat higher than China, but that gap seemed to be almost closed by August 2013. Zooming in on the military assertiveness, the results reveal that China is more inclined to factual and negative attitudes than Russia is.

When we look specifically at the events that were coded as military assertiveness and their breakdown in positive/neutral vs. positive and factual vs rhetorical, we note that both China's and Russia's actions seem to speak louder than their words – a gap that is bigger for China (and growing) than it is for Russia (where it is declining).

What Do the Official Websites Tell Us? Off-Base and N-grams

The second dataset we turn to is an official one. In our analysis of GDELT-data, we already pointed out that both countries tend to speak more softly than they behave. But that was based on an automated analysis of what was said about those countries in newspaper articles. We also wanted to find out – and construct a similarly

comprehensive database of – what these countries themselves say about this. Unfortunately there are no equivalents to GDELT for this. As we briefly described above, HCSS therefore decided to create the HCSS 'Off-Base', a database containing all text-based webpages of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of 7 great powers, including China and Russia. In this section we will just zoom in on all occurrences of a basket of terms that can be said to convey a sense of that country's assertiveness. We will examine which other terms also occur around those assertiveness-related terms on these web-pages. To the extent possible, we use the same coding conventions as we did for GDELT. As with GDELT, this is pioneering work. As such, it remains subject to a number of important caveats that are described in more detail in our supporting material[41]. But HCSS strongly feels that the field of foreign and security policy analysis is in dire need of more systematic datasets. We therefore use any opportunity to push the boundaries of our possibilities. It is in this spirit that we constructed this new dataset and present this preliminary analysis.

China: Professing Positive Assertiveness... Except in its 'Near Abroad'

In order to be able to zoom in on all instances of China's possible assertiveness (as opposed to Chinese claims about other countries' assertiveness), we used the following 'basket' of expressions: **"**China assert"[42] OR "China want" OR "China need" OR "China claim" OR "China reaffirm" OR "China provoke" OR China "defamation".

The results suggest that China seems to position itself as a great power by promoting its own aspirations for a peaceful rise, and denouncing assertiveness and assertive behaviors of others – especially those threatening its interests. On its website, China portrays itself as a great power that is increasingly asserting its national *grandeur*. This assertiveness is most firmly (and increasingly) expressed in matters of territorial sovereignty and tends to be voiced at the regional level (Southeast Asia and East Asia, including Japan). Our findings suggest that the international economic and political spheres – more so than the military sphere – are deemed increasingly important in the making and promotion of China as a great power.

All key words that were analyzed have significantly gained in importance in recent years (particularly since 2007-8) in terms of normalized frequency of occurrence.

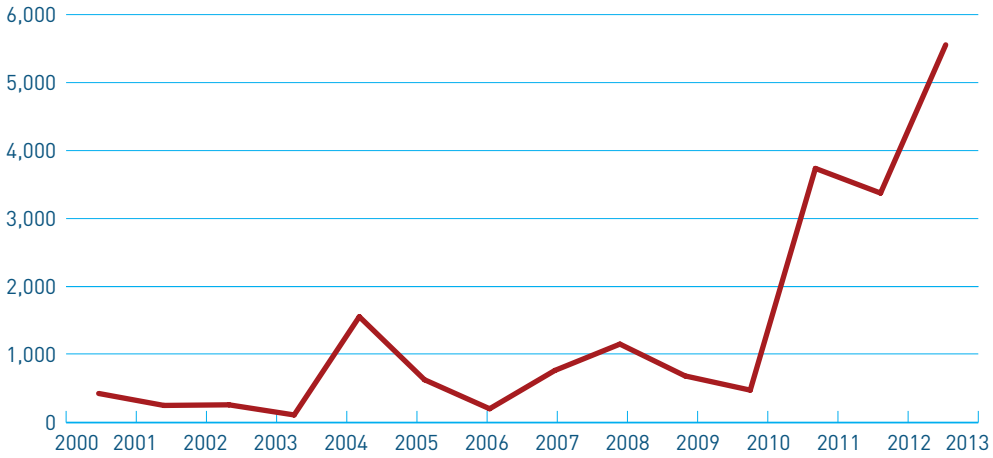


FIGURE 2.16: TOTAL ANNUAL FREQUENCY IN NUMBER OF HITS FOR ALL KEY WORDS GENERATED BY THE QUERY FOR CHINESE OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS. NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS MATCHED: 146. TOTAL NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS IN ENGLISH: 11587

'China' is by far (656 times) the most frequently used term that is associated with our 'assertiveness' basket, 'Developing' (233), 'cooperation' (185)[43] closely follow, as well as 'peacefully' (89). The website suggests that it is through **peaceful development and cooperation** that China envisages its growth and its rise as a great world power. Therefore, China's verbal strategy appears more inclusive and non-confrontational, seeking external cooperation. Some elements indicate a rather friendly, positive tone which has remained constant over time, further confirmed by the presence of 'efforts' (38) or 'peacefully developing' (32), 'respect' (30), 'positive' (22), 'understanding' (21), 'pacific' and 'sincere' (11), 'China seeks harmony', 'prosperous', etc. A good example is found in the focus on 'Syria' – showing China's interest in the region and its issues, as well as its desire to play a significant role by suggesting that the Syrian conflict requires the world's main powers to take a stance: 'concern Syria', 'interests Syrian people', 'solution Syrian'. This shows the intention of China to appear as involved, but in a peaceful way. In addition, China does not sees itself as the world's single key player as it recognizes the **importance of 'mutually beneficial**' and 'international/ trilateral cooperation'.

The frequency of verbs such as 'wanted' (43) or 'China wanted' (40), 'stated' (41), 'reaffirmed' (30) connotes **a rather confident rhetoric** in China's discourse. This confidence also remained consistent over time, which tends to indicate that the Chinese confidence may not be as recent as many 'Western' scholars claim.

The emergence of many terms belonging to the **economic domain** such as 'company' and 'investment', next to 'promotion' ('investment promotion') and 'establishment' ('establishment company investment'), suggests that one way for China to grow and assert itself as a world power is to spread its companies' presence and business. This 'economic' theme clearly has not always occupied the central stage as an instrument of Chinese assertiveness, as many relevant key words only appear in recent years, which coincides with our GDELT findings (peaking for economic assertiveness in 2008).

'Sovereignty' (19), 'territorial' (18), 'sovereignty territorial' (13), 'sovereignty territorial integration' (11), 'independence sovereignty territorial' (6) – these words are connected to the **importance of territorial sovereignty** as a major cause to defend – and increasingly so given the ongoing territorial disputes. It is not a surprise to see 'Japan' is a rather frequently used term (20), alone or next to 'Diaoyu' or 'provocation', as well as the presence of 'Taiwan' and 'Taiwan inseparable'.

References to the military are quite rare, and are not among the most frequently mentioned terms. Interesting ones include 'military build-up', or 'bilateral military relationship'. 'Arms'/'arms control', and 'weapons' seldom appear, but they are often coupled with – respectively – 'disarmament' and 'convention', 'nuclear', thereby reinforcing this perception of a rather peaceful discourse or a concern for the use of such weapons.

Russia's Steadily Growing and Pragmatic Assertiveness, Focused on (/against) the West

For Russia, there is no clear definition, translation or contextual use of 'assertiveness' in the selected documents.[44] After careful investigation, we used the following 'basket' of expressions: "утверждает OR требует OR нуждается OR хочет OR продвигает OR провоцирует OR предлагает" ['state', 'demand', 'need', 'want', 'push', 'provoke', 'suggest'].

Our analysis suggests that Russia's assertiveness is mostly expressed towards the West rather than other great powers like China, mostly towards states but also within international organizations – specifically the UN – and mostly with the objective of defending security and economic interests.

The general overview of the N-grams that are associated with these terms reveals a steady growth of assertive-related matches in the Russian foreign policy discourse (Figure 2.17).

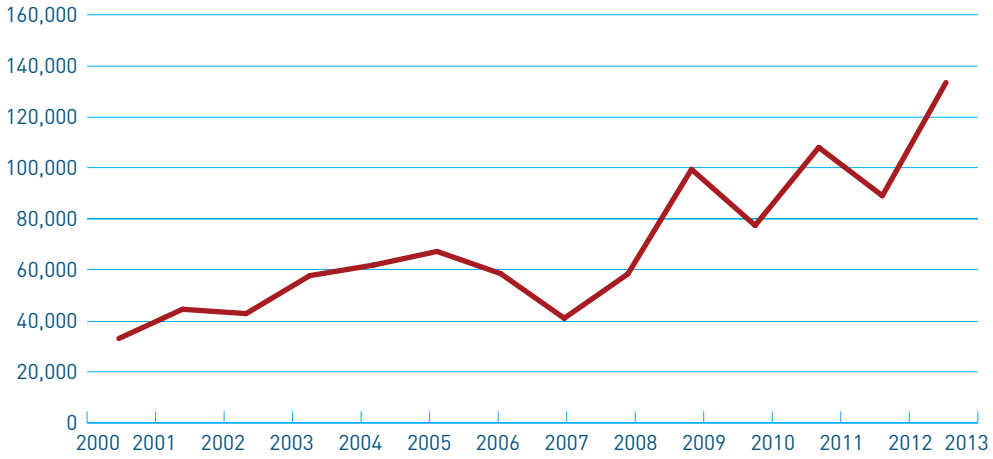


FIGURE 2.17: TOTAL ANNUAL FREQUENCY IN NUMBER OF HITS FOR ALL KEY WORDS GENERATED BY THE QUERY FOR RUSSIAN OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS. NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS MATCHED: 3999. TOTAL NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS: 17914

'**Russia'** tops the chart by far. Mentions of 'Russia' itself (and 'Russian government') remain quite evenly distributed throughout all years. The players and powers of interest to Russia and involved in the international arena particularly include countries and states. The West scores the highest, before Asia and Africa: 'USA' – 785, 'European' – 692, 'Europe' – 613, 'EU' – 491; 'CIS' (Commonwealth of Independent States, surrounding Russia). It is worth noting that the US still prevails in this context and that Russia's assertiveness appears to be more targeted at the world's sole remaining superpower than at anybody else (including Europe or China). Yet since 2007 we also observe a sharp increase in the importance of the EU in this 'game of power'. Africa scores quite low in frequency overall, and although it seemed to have gained the attention of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2007 to 2011, its frequency declined ever since. China, India and the Asia Pacific score low, perhaps suggesting that Russia was never keen on asserting policy objectives in these regions.

Such 'state actors' are followed by large **international or regional organizations,** including the UN, whose mechanisms allow enough space for assertive maneuvering and are very much used by Russia for this purpose; the OSCE, as Russia's dominating security interests are focused on security; and much less frequently, the BRICS.

The **geographical focus** of Russian foreign policy is mostly regional, slightly increasing over time. One piece of evidence is that 'region' (1410) and 'regional' (1203) score much higher than 'world' (731) and 'global' (729). This may nuance the idea that Russia would have ambitions for global domination.

There are frequent mentions of areas in which Russia tends to express assertiveness, and most have increased over time. The **'security'** sphere remains the core area where Russian foreign policy displays the most assertive features. It indeed scores first ('security' – 2755; 'terrorism' – 916; 'threat' – 828; 'nuclear' – 781; 'military' – 774; 'weapons' – 647); followed by an **economic theme** ('economic' – 1574, 'financial' – 743, 'economy' 669) and a 'legal' domain (790).

Finally, the results highlight a definite **cooperative undercurrent** – in line with the positive assertiveness in coding. Unsurprisingly, official texts suggest that Russia is playing according to international rules ('cooperation' – 2071, 'negotiate' – 1487, 'agreements' – 1347, 'peace' – 1107), rather than emphasizing conflict ('fight' – 958, 'conflict' – 605; 'responsibility' – 516, 'against' – 496, 'demand' – 489). Yet there is no clear prevalence of a particular cooperation mode over time, and little to suggest that there have been significant shifts in this respect. This may indicate that Russia's assertiveness is implemented both through calls for cooperation and accusations, through a balanced mix of 'peace' and 'fight'. One cannot state that Russia is either cooperation-oriented, or aggressively positioned within the international arena. Russian diplomacy seems to pragmatically mix wording in official documents according to specific circumstances.

Cross-Country Comparison

Over the last ten years, both China and Russia have increasingly emphasized the importance of a global focus, where they feel their voice can and should be heard and which they want to use as part of their identity as global powers. It may very well be that the important finding here is not so much assertiveness *per se*, but the area in which it is expressed. And this area has expanded. Russia focuses particularly on **the UN** as an important instrument. China shows its interest for the rest of the world by emphasizing concepts of **cooperation in a broad range of domains** (from cultural to diplomatic and economic). Russia appears to show fewer global ambitions than China which also considers different channels to increase or maintain its influence. Concretely, while China looks at **other major countries,** regions (Europe) or continents (Africa), Russia has greater expectations of **international organizations.**

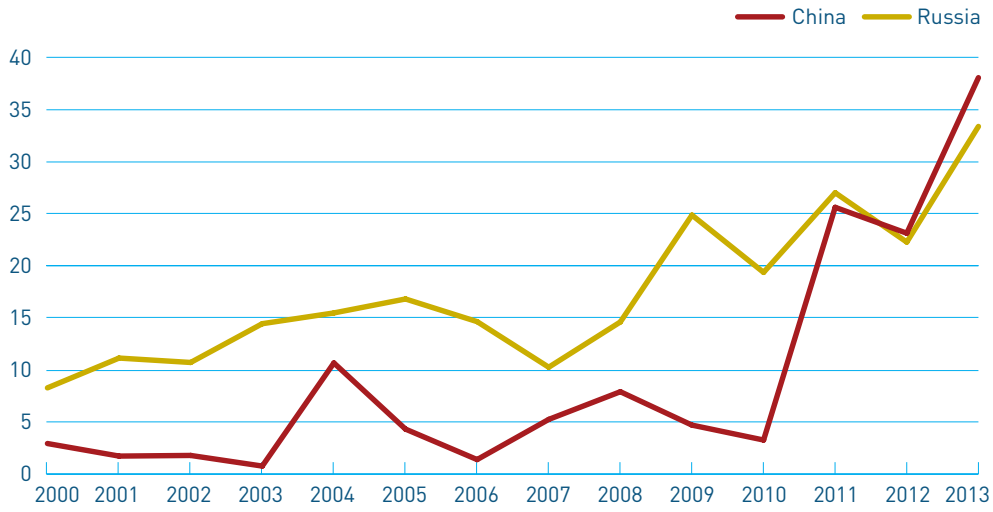


FIGURE 2.18: NORMALIZED FREQUENCIES OF THE NUMBER OF HITS FOR ALL KEY WORDS GENERATED BY THE QUERY FOR RUSSIAN AND CHINESE OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS, OVER TIME.

The economic domain (and to a lesser extent, the legal domain) seems to be a predominant arena in which both powers express their concerns and ambitions (even if these are ambitions for cooperation) and where they stress their interests. Yet each country also has a particular topic of interest on which they do not hesitate to assert their views or condemn the attitudes of others. For Russia, this would be matters of **hard security**, such as terrorism and nuclear security. As for China, this 'hard' security aspect is far less dominant; rather, there is a particularly strong rhetoric about the defense of sovereignty – that is, its own **territorial sovereignty** *vis-à-vis* the ongoing disputes with Japan, and the situation with Taiwan.

Both countries' rhetoric is not negative. This reflects official foreign policy discourses, which naturally tend to express views in a diplomatic way, and communicate national priorities for cooperation over conflict. But Russia's foreign policy seems more assertive by nature than that of China, due to the difference in the tone employed. China uses a **non-confrontational, friendly, pacific** rhetoric (insofar as its territorial sovereignty is not the heart of the matter), uniformly across the official statements. Russia is **more nuanced**, verbalizing its positions in a more neutral way, at times administrative but sometimes also ambivalent, if not ambiguous. It is indeed difficult to clearly identify assertiveness across Russian documents through an explicit rhetoric. There seems to be a balance between an invitation for peace and cooperation,

on the one hand, and a need to show that Russia stands firm regarding certain occasions – not necessarily depending on the issue at stake, as is the case with Chinese territorial disputes, but rather on the circumstances – on the other.

What Does the Scholarly Literature Tell Us? EBSCO

After the media and the official websites, we also wanted to survey the evidence for assertiveness that is adduced by experts in the scholarly literature. Contrary to the media (GDELT; where we analyzed millions of newspaper articles) or the websites (HCSS Off-Base, also containing tens of thousands of text documents), in this case the sources that were published in the past year and contained the words 'China' or 'Russia' within five words of terms like 'assertiveness' or 'aggressiveness' were far more manageable (tens). These were therefore analyzed manually. Across the articles, several findings can be highlighted for both the rhetorical and the factual Chinese and Russian types of assertiveness, as well as their respective tones, i.e., either positive/neutral, or negative.

This review included EBSCO's articles, in English, thereby producing a 'Western' perspective. To balance this vision, we added the work of our Chinese and Russian analysts, who looked at how Chinese and Russian scholars, in their languages, interpret the so-called assertiveness of their respective nations.

China

Statistics

Figure 2.19 shows that across the literature selected for China, we found more evidence for factual than rhetorical assertiveness. This differs, for instance, from the results of GDELT-data which suggested that words were more widely used than acts.

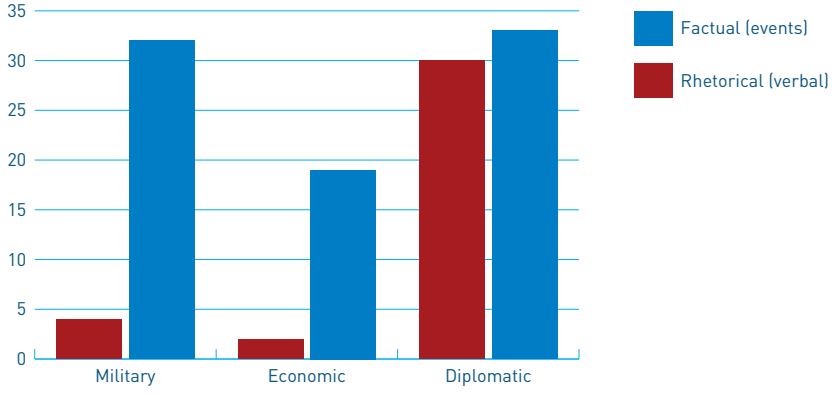


FIGURE 2.19: NUMBER OF RHETORICAL OR FACTUAL SIGNALS OF ASSERTIVENESS FOR CHINA, BY TYPE (MILITARY, ECONOMIC, DIPLOMATIC)

However, similarly to GDELT-trends, diplomacy is the most common way through which rhetorical assertiveness transpires, by far, and it can be mainly associated with a positive or neutral level than a negative one. We found no evidence of negative military assertiveness, nor did we of positive/neutral economic assertiveness.

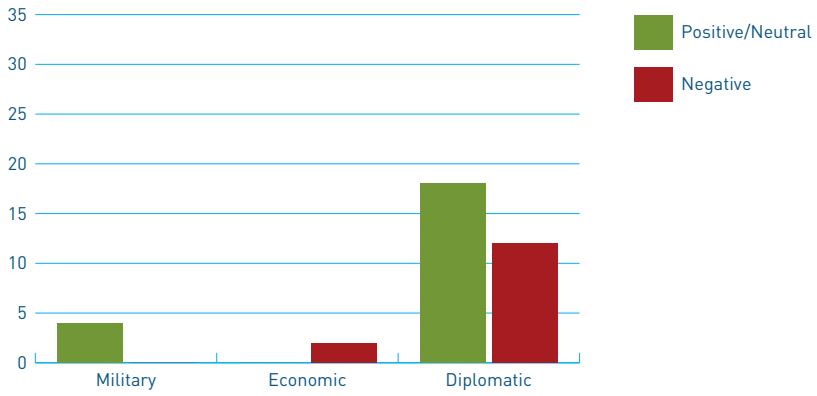


FIGURE 2.20: NUMBER OF POSITIVE/NEUTRAL OR NEGATIVE RHETORICAL SIGNALS OF ASSERTIVENESS FOR CHINA, BY TYPE (MILITARY, ECONOMIC, DIPLOMATIC)

The factual assertiveness seems more balanced across all three categories, although here again, diplomatic assertiveness dominates, followed by the military category. Factual assertiveness tends to be more positive or neutral than the rhetoric, especially in the diplomatic and economic fields.

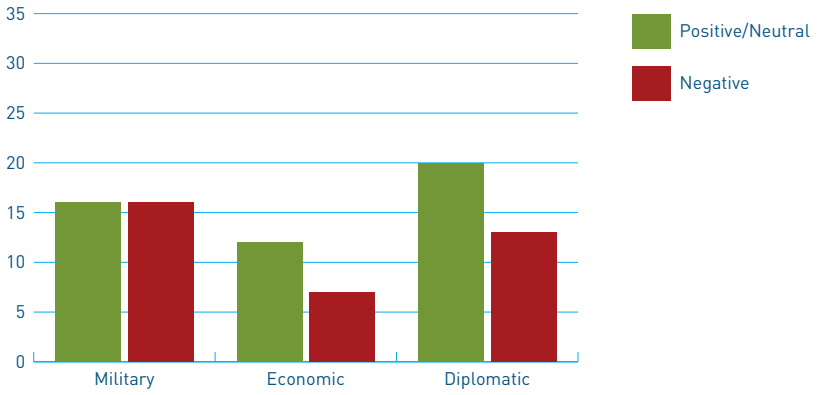


FIGURE 2.21: NUMBER OF POSITIVE/NEUTRAL OR NEGATIVE FACTUAL SIGNALS OF ASSERTIVENESS FOR CHINA, BY TYPE (MILITARY, ECONOMIC, DIPLOMATIC)

Military

Rhetorical Evidence

Our literature review identified four occasions on which China manifested a **positive or neutral** military assertiveness. Such rhetoric has become more obvious since 2008. China **expresses its objectives and intentions more clearly over time**, e.g., with Xi Jinping's declarations in December 2012 that by 2049 China will become the chief military power in the Asia-Pacific region.[45] China also **establishes strategies, such as the one outlined** in 2008 Beijing's defense White Paper, which stressed the need for Chinese navy to be able to perform operations worldwide.[46]

Factual Evidence

Regarding the military factual assertiveness (as shown in Figure 2.21), Chinese attitudes tend to be equally positive/neutral and negative.

Several authors have identified many cases of **military incidents** between China and other parties, particularly since 2009. For instance, a scuffle with Vietnamese fishing boats near Hainan Island in 2005,[47] or the sinking of a fishing boat in the Spratly Islands by a Chinese naval patrol boat (one casualty of the boat's crew members) in 2007.[48] In the spring of 2011, "Chinese patrol ships harassed Vietnamese seismic survey boats in disputed waters".[49]

Positive/neutral military events can be identified as 'neutral' examples of assertiveness rather than 'positive' ones. China **led military cooperation initiatives**, for instance in 2008 with the "deployment of warships to conduct counter piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden",[50] or earlier on, with Ethiopia since 2005 in "military training, exchange of military technologies, and peacekeeping mission, among others".[51] But China has also been flexing muscles since, e.g., by increasing the supply of air and maritime patrols in the area of Diaoyu/Senkaku in 2012.[52] Besides, such events include many instances of **military build-up:** development of modern weaponry and military capabilities (including in power projection),[53] expansion of China's "arsenal of warheads, the building of new nuclear-armed submarines, and development of next-generation, road-mobile ICBMs with multiple independently re-entry vehicle warheads".[54] And such examples of military build-up **have only been growing** over time, at a fast pace. In 2002, China was reported "to have 350 short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) deployed opposite Taiwan" and 1.000-1.200 in 2011, "along with hundreds of new longer range missiles targeting US and allied bases throughout Asia".[55] Another indicator of China's growing military assertiveness is the **rise of its military expenditure.** As Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe put it:

"China increased its military spending 30-fold" over the last decades.[56] Defense spending has even more than doubled between 2006 and 2013.[57] China **progressively expanded its defense industry**, too. China had already significantly increased its supply of arms to Africa between 1996 and 2003,[58] and had become the continent's second biggest supplier of arms. And in 2012, China had become the 5th largest defense exporter.[59]

Economic

Rhetorical Evidence

Two pieces of evidence for economic rhetoric were identified across the literature. They are both **recent** and **negative**, concern **resources,** although indirectly, and China's territorial sovereignty. The first one is related to the denial of resources. In 2007, China requested "oil and gas firms to stop their exploration-oriented activities with Vietnamese partners in the SCC, while threatening these companies with unspecified consequences for their business dealings with China".[60] The other occasion was about resource exploration. In 2012, China announced plans to drill oil in disputed waters in the South China Sea.[61]

Factual Evidence

Negative economic events, associated mainly with **resources** and the **cyber domain**, are only identified in recent years. Authors tend to recall that China is conducting an aggressive search to breach public and private computer systems, and the "theft of confidential business information and proprietary technologies through cyber intrusions".[62] Yet economic disputes in which Chinese assertiveness is clearly manifested concern resources, especially in its neighborhood.[63] Almost logically, they seem related to maritime, territorial disputes, touching upon one of China's most crucial interests – its sovereignty and its will to defend it at all costs. Resource or sea denials are regularly identified in **recent years**. For example in 2009, with the "imposition of unilateral fishing bans in the South China Sea";[64] in September 2010, with an embargo blocking exports of rare-earth minerals to Japan (after an incident in which Japan arrested the captain of a trawler who collided with a Japanese patrol boat near the Senkaku islands[65]).

Still, factual examples of **positive or neutral economic assertiveness** were more frequent. Our results show that over time, China has **increasingly** shown positive signs in its attitude towards the rest of the world regarding economic **cooperation**: the agreement to increase direct trade and transportation between China and Taiwan in November 2008,[66] with the US-China bilateral forum for Strategic and Economic

Dialogue in April 2009.[67] In addition, the revision of the Foreign Trade Law was implemented in 2004 to comply with the commitment to the World Trade Organization, and expand China's economic opening to the rest of the world.[68] However, we note that Sino-African relations and the economic involvement of China in Africa are **less recent** than commonly thought. In the 1990s, Sino-African trade increased by 700%; in 2000, China cancelled $1.2 billion of African debt and $750 million in 2003.[69]

Diplomacy

Rhetorical Evidence

Cheng (2013) emphasizes aspects of a **positive rhetoric** which would have been **rising steadily over time** in Chinese diplomacy. He reminds us that in 2002 former President Jiang Zemin elaborated on China's "periphery diplomacy" i.e., "do good to neighboring countries and treat them as partners". This suggests an objective to strengthen **political cooperation** at the regional level. In the following years, there is **growing evidence of a will to develop economic cooperation**. In 2003, Premier Wen Jiabao addressed the ASEAN Commerce and Investment Summit by enunciating the principle of "maintaining good relations with China's neighboring countries, offering them security and prosperity". At the 17th Party Congress in 2007, "Hu Jintao had declared that China would "implement a free trade area strategy, strengthen bilateral and multilateral economic and trade cooperation".

There are however limits to economic cooperation, especially when China's **territorial sovereignty** is at stake: one cooperation agreement with Japan had failed due to the escalation of confrontation over the claim of Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands.[70] Several authors such as Johnston or MacLeod refer to such assertiveness, particularly regarding maritime and territorial claims, as 'revisionist'.[71] These claims have **intensified in recent years.** For instance, Yang Jiechi (China's foreign minister) had stressed in March 2013 that the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands are China's inherent territory.[72]

There are elements suggesting that lately China's concerns over sovereignty no longer even solely include their own borders. This is quite clear from reading through recent declarations of Chinese officials mentioning the Arctic's sovereignty (in 2009 and 2010).[73]

China **demands change**, not least to reform the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea regarding free navigation through the Arctic sea-lanes.[74] In the 1990s, this was already perceptible, even in fundamental debates or themes. For instance, Vice

Premier Qian Qichen had expressed in 1996 the intent to change the security concept to establish the basis of a new international order.[75]

China **verbally accuses, protests or defends its interests.** Authors noticed such attitudes throughout 2010 and vis-à-vis the US, with Chinese "angry reactions to US arms sales to Taiwan in January", or to the visit of the Dalai Lama to the US.[76] Johnston (2013) emphasizes that China still **overtly exerts pressures** on governments of North Korea and Sudan.[77] In April 2012, China accused Japan of "nationalization of sacred Chinese land", after Tokyo's governor Shintaro Ishihara announced the plans to purchase three of Senkaku's private islands.[78]

Another field in which such level and tone of assertiveness is expressed, is the **cyber domain**. The official rhetoric of China in 2013 has been to **deny responsibility** for cyber espionage, or to assert that China would be a victim of cyber attacks itself.[79]

Factual Evidence

Events in diplomacy reflecting China's assertiveness have been **mostly positive or neutral.** According to Glasser (2013), China traditionally uses the military as a secret political weapon in diplomatic relations (Clausewitz). It indeed primarily focuses on many of the **different levels of cooperation.**

As previously mentioned, economic cooperation has recently emerged as one of the many diplomatic instruments used by China.[80] **Cultural projection** is at the heart of China's diplomatic assertiveness. Since 2004, the country has sought to promote or even spread its culture and language, thus cultivating its soft power. China started the Confucius Institute project: by 2012, there were 400 institutes in over 50 countries.[81]

Diplomatic cooperation finds many other positive or neutral illustrations, with **China's increasingly active and visible attitude** in regional forums aimed at strengthening its influence and cultivating its soft power.[82] China made several significant steps in this direction over the last decade. In 2001, China **voted in favor** of four UN Security Council resolutions dealing with Afghanistan and global counterterrorism efforts.[83] 2013 saw the formation of a US-China cyber security working group, and it was also the year China signed the UN Disarmament and International Security Committee.[84] China also **started to engage in negotiations**, even when sensitive issues were involved: in 2009, China agreed with the US to talk with representatives of the Dalai Lama, attended the US-hosted Nuclear Security Summit in April 2010, and supported the UN Security Council resolution 1929, which imposed tougher sanctions on the Iranian regime in 2010.[85]

At the same time, there have been significant events that can be assessed as reflecting a 'negative' type of diplomatic assertiveness. 2009 saw China adopting an assertive posture at the Copenhagen Conference on climate change, reflected in the "rudeness of Chinese diplomats toward President Barack Obama".[86] When the delegation returned to China it was criticized for its poor performance.[87] This is a commonly used example that demonstrates China's **diplomatic, yet strongly assertive** behavior. In addition, China used its status to **veto**, sometimes jointly with Russia, several UN Security Council resolutions: in 2007 against the Burmese military junta in Myanmar; against in 2008 against sanctions against the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe; in October 2011 against a European-sponsored resolution threatening the Syrian regime with economic sanctions "if it did not immediately halt its military crackdown against its civilian"; and in 2012 against British-sponsored resolution to impose economic sanction against Syrian government for failing to carry out a peace plan.[88]

And here again, **territorial claims** appear as one of the most common recourse of China in asserting its positions diplomatically, and have been voiced increasingly in recent years. In 2007, China declared Sansha to be "an integral part of the province of Hainan".[89] Tensions with the Philippines and Vietnam followed Chinese claims over the entire South China Sea in 2011 and 2012.[90] Authors often refer to the recent tensions with Japan over Chinese claims of the Senkaku Islands,[91] as a dispute which "nearly caused a war".[92]

Perspectives in the Chinese Language Domain

Generally, examples or evidence used by Chinese scholars are similar to those commonly found in the 'Western' literature. There are some precise factual elements that seem to fully support the 'Western' perception of a new form of Chinese assertiveness – if not enhanced assertive behaviors. But one difference lies in the justification of these positions by Chinese authors: which claim that they are not meant as a threat and that they are driven by the objective of maintaining national stability.

With respect to the rhetoric, Chinese authors emphasize key objectives or 'core interests'. One is the importance of safeguarding China's sovereignty and territorial integrity; another is the continuity of China's economic growth and social development (confirming the aforementioned economic focus); a third one is the survival of China's political system and national security – which was reflected in the results of the literature review by e.g., the vetoes to UN Security Council resolutions, the demands

for change, etc. Authors emphasize that as a rising power, China logically *had* to transform its policy. These 'core interests' were launched in 2009, which explains the shift observed in China's attitude since that year.[93] But while this new direction is frequently interpreted as 'assertive', in the Chinese perspective it is nothing but a strategy for China **to signal and communicate** its private information to the outside world **for future cooperation.** The purpose of clearly making the world aware of its core interests is to draw a red line that other states should not to cross.[94]

China's increased assertiveness can be characterized as 'non-confrontational',[95] which means that at the strategic level China will not pursue confrontation with other regional actors. However, authors expect that China's territorial policy will become stronger and even characterized by a more stubborn stance along with its increased power. The main reason, however, would be a concern for domestic legitimacy: a lax attitude of Chinese leaders would likely face prohibitively high domestic audience costs.[96]

Looking at factual evidence, authors posit that China's self-confidence has grown in several domains through its military and economic progress.

According to Chinese scholars, a **stronger stance and new found confidence** have been reflected in **several major recent events**: Copenhagen in 2009; the recognition of South China Sea as one of China's core national (territorial) interests in 2010. The increasing mobilization of armed forces and build-up of military might, as well as the use of vetoes, are acknowledged by Chinese authors.[97] These examples were also identified by the selection of 'Western' articles.

China is **increasingly voicing sovereignty concerns**,[98] getting involved in territorial disputes in the Korean Peninsula and the South and East China sea,[99] imposing blockades (e.g., through a heavy-handed response to American arms sales to Taiwan[100]), and even providing military protection. While in 1998 China had only verbally expressed concerns over the anti-Chinese riots backed by some high-ranking military officials in Indonesia, it now confidently sends navy ships and air force planes to evacuate entrapped overseas Chinese from the war zone.[101]

But Chinese scholars insist that **China does not have any new territorial ambitions.** What China wants to accomplish is to recover lost territories, such as Taiwan, and to secure its sovereignty control over its own territories, such as Tibet. They emphasize that Chinese leaders have been trying to allay apprehensions of other global players.[102]

At the Boao Forum President Hu pledged that China ought to resolve its territorial disputes with neighboring countries through peaceful means to build a 'harmonious Asia'. In a similar vein, Premier Wen emphasized a willingness to improve engagement and cooperation with neighboring countries during his trips to Malaysia and Indonesia. China's peaceful rise strategy is not just rooted in China's peace-loving culture, as the Chinese government claims. It is also a **rational strategy** to bargain for a low-cost **deal with others, and for them to accept China's ascent**.[103]

Russia

Statistics

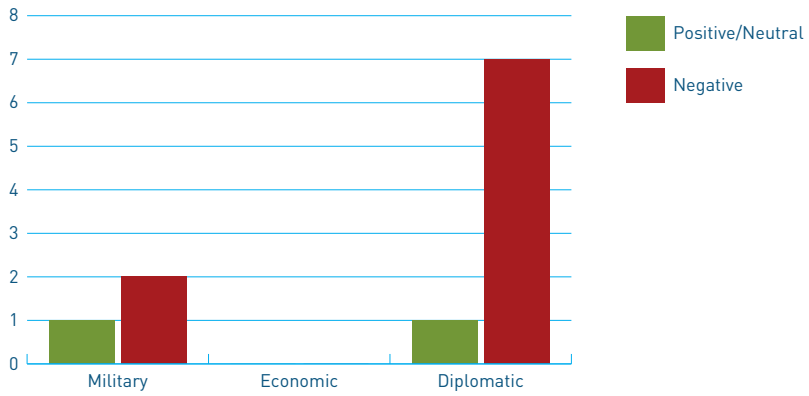


FIGURE 2.22: NUMBER OF POSITIVE/NEUTRAL OR NEGATIVE FACTUAL SIGNALS OF ASSERTIVENESS FOR RUSSIA, BY TYPE (MILITARY, ECONOMIC, DIPLOMATIC)

To sum up, no factual economic events nor rhetoric assertiveness were registered. Most factual evidence is negative, and mainly manifests through diplomatic channels rather than military means.

Military: Factual Evidence

Military build-up is one way for Russia to assert its position, for example with the acquisition of Mistral-class ships from France in 2011.[104] A stronger military assertiveness is reflected in **several sporadic** occasions, from the Soviet Union's increase of its military presence and build-up in East Asia in the 1970s,[105] to recent **military attacks** i.e., the invasion of Georgia in 2008.[106]

Diplomacy: Factual Evidence

Most examples of diplomatic assertiveness found for Russia are assessed as **negative**, according to our coding scheme. Many are caused by **vetoes** on UN resolutions e.g. in 1999 against military action in Yugoslavia; in 2003 against military action in Iraq,[107] and, jointly with China, in 2012 against military action in Syria (the different occasions were mentioned in the previous section). This has always been a way for Russia to express assertive positions as a great power: between 1945 and 2013 the USSR (then Russia) cast nearly half (128) of all the vetoes in the UN's 68-year history.

Perspectives in the Russian Language Domain

The word 'assertiveness' is rarely (if at all) used by Russia as far as foreign policy matters are concerned. There is also no translation, or even contextual translation, which can be expressed with a word or a phrase. In the Russian language, it usually reflects individual behavioral characteristics. There is some Russian academic literature that investigates major global actors' assertiveness, but it is quite scant.

Kireeva analyzes the reasons behind the emergence of great powers. According to this author, this was the reaction to the "inability of the US, as a global leader, to meet international challenges and threats in different parts of the world". As a result, self-confident, autonomous, and active players emerged, and the importance of relations at the regional level (as compared to bilateral and global) increased in international relations. Summarizing Kireeva's point, the role of great powers in their respective regions is becoming ever more important.[108]

Blank characterizes Russian foreign policy as quite assertive, by particularly looking at Latin America. In 2008 Russia tried to become an influential regional actor by establishing bilateral ties and making trade deals. After a few years, the destabilizing effect of Russia's way of doing business (e.g., selling weapons to Venezuela) became obvious to other regional players. Blank suggests an official explanation for such policy – Medvedev's theses about expanding markets while fighting economic hardship – but posits that Russian foreign policy in Latin America is rather reflected by geopolitical acts against the US. The economic dimension is present, but is not the main driver of Russian foreign policy's strategic orientation.[109]

According to Kireeva, each great power has its ways of implementing assertive measures in its *geographical* region, while Blank suggests an understanding of region as a "region of interests".

Assertiveness is mostly a subject found across official doctrines in foreign policy. Judging by the tone and substance of the Russian core principles of foreign policy[110], and by the article "Russia in the Changing World" written by Vladimir Putin, the head of the Russian government at the time,[111] one can more easily associate both rhetorical and factual Russian attitudes with assertive features: clear, assured, demanding, permanent, value and interest-driven. The word 'aggression' itself is often avoided, which does not however imply that such statements have a fully peaceful and cooperative nature.

In Putin's article, ensuring security comes first, followed by the promotion of economic interests, while the 'humanitarian sphere' is placed towards the end. The article avoids aggression-related topics, unless one looks at it from another angle, and it is full of elements connoting assertiveness. As Putin claimed, it is impossible to achieve global security without Russia.

Putin stressed that NATO actions undermine trust and threaten future global cooperation, and accuses NGOs of destabilizing the situation in countries using 'soft power' instruments.

The **rise of China**, however, is verbally assessed quite positively by the Russian leader, who sees it as bringing "enormous potential for business cooperation". He also calls for continuing political cooperation in the international arena, as both countries share a common vision of the future world system. He verbally expresses intentions to cooperate economically with emerging continents (Asia, Latin America and Africa), and emphasizes Russia's interest in a strong **European Union** and its powerful cooperation potential".

But Russia also considers **US** stereotypes of Russia to be the cause of unsuccessful Russian-American relations, and Putin refutes accusations that Russia has poor human rights record and that it has crossed all existing boundaries.

Cross-Country Comparison

Our selection of articles **yielded a richer diversity of results for China** than for Russia. In 2013, the academic field may have been focusing more on the existence of a Chinese assertiveness. It is still possible to deduct some similarities between both countries' behaviors, particularly with respect to 'negative' diplomatic assertiveness. Both China and Russia resort mostly to **diplomatic tools**, either with the verb or through actions. Both make use of vetoes to mark their positions and manifest their

opposition to the international community's preferences. Instances of Russia's military assertiveness seem to occur sporadically, and compared to China there is little to suggest (at least based on this literature review) that it has become more vociferous in the last few years. Chinese types of assertiveness are well-balanced across the different categories – military (from build-up to incidents), economic (from cooperation efforts to resource blockades) and, primarily, diplomatic ones (from cultural diplomacy, an involvement in institutions and the demand for change, to the denial of responsibility and vetoes).

What Do (Some) Statistical Indicators Tell Us? GeoRisQ

The third and final piece of evidence that HCSS looked at in order to establish whether the claims of increased assertiveness can be backed up by different types of evidence, are some quantitative datasets. For this, we were able to draw upon the existing HCSS GeoRisQ database, which contains various datasets that are relevant to international security. Based on our literature review in search of the main data points that are often cited to illustrate China's and Russia's assertive attitudes, a number of indicators were selected to capture the extent of Chinese and Russian assertiveness. These include the four most frequently covered domains of assertiveness: diplomatic, economic, military and informational. For each of these domains, we selected some 'proxies' that are intended to capture some of the key dynamics at work in them. This collection of indicators is of course not exhaustive, but it does attempt to paint a picture that is illustrative of what is going on.

Military Indicators

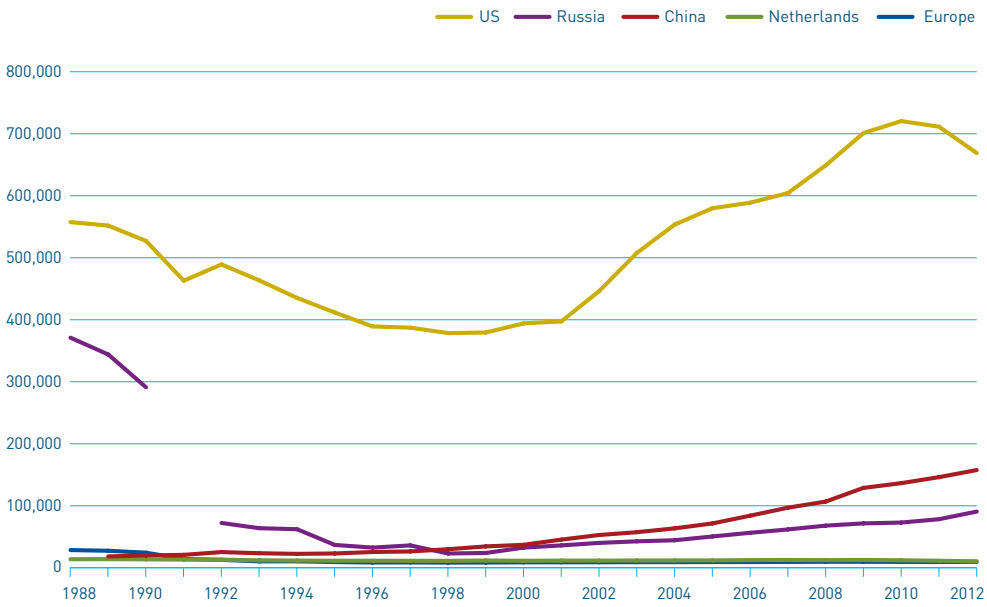


FIGURE 2.23: MILITARY EXPENDITURES IN CHINA AND RUSSIA (CONSTANT 2010 MILLION US$; 1998-2012). SOURCE: SIPRI[112]

China is far behind the US in terms of military expenditure, which puts the increasing Chinese military assertiveness identified in the literature review in some perspective. But its military budget has been steadily expanding since the end of the 1990s. This has also triggered an increasingly visible arms race in East Asia which was not the subject of this study, but which is clearly borne out by the data[113] and by a number of authoritative studies.[114]

Russia exhibits a similar trend, although its expenditure and growth in it are lagging behind China's. Also, because Russia is adjacent by a stable and fairly strong alliance (NATO/EU) along its Western borders and by an increasingly potent but not northward-looking China on its Southern border, it means that the destabilizing ripple effects beyond its borders have so far remained relatively modest.

It is interesting to look at **military expenditure as a percentage of GDP.** This indicator reflects the nation's willingness to spend on defense and security and its ability to defend itself and gain hard power.

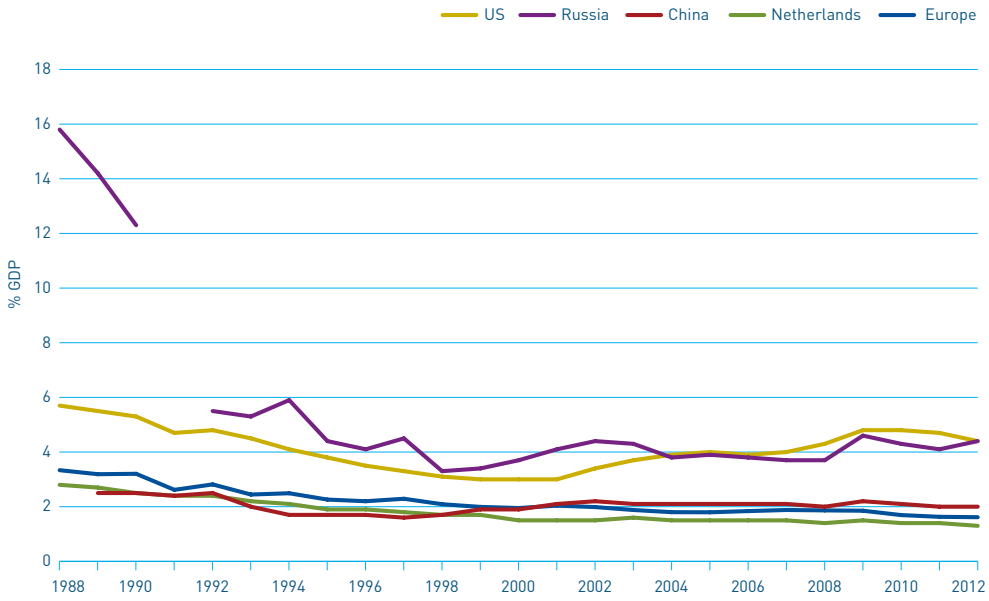


FIGURE 2.24: MILITARY EXPENDITURES AS % OF GDP IN CHINA, RUSSIA, THE US, EUROPE, AND THE NETHERLANDS (1988-2012). SOURCE: SIPRI[115]

If we zoom in on the proportion of GDP that countries are willing to invest in defense (Figure 2.24), we see that since the end of the Cold War Russia has consistently spent about the same amount as the US has (since 2003, around 4% and up to 4.5%). For all the talk about China's increased military assertiveness, we see that since 2000 China's defense share has actually remained stable, around 2%.But whereas the piece of the pie has not changed much, the difference with Figure 2.23 is explained by the fact that the pie has grown significantly thanks to China's unrivalled growth rates.

Information Indicators: Cyber Attacks

Everybody recognizes the growing importance of the information sphere for international relations and international security – both in a positive and a negative sense. Unfortunately – and much of this has to do with the very 'new' and elusive character of information – we do not yet have good datasets to measure the 'power' of various countries in this area. We therefore suggest to treat Figure 2.25 with caution. Whereas this is the most frequently used dataset for the country of origin of cyber attacks in 2013, it has to be recognized that this is based on the geo-location of the observed ip-address, and thus is of limited usefulness in determining the actual

provenance. Still, despite all of these caveats, this dataset indicates that China appears to be extremely assertive in this domain as well.

	COUNTRY	Q3 '13 % TRAFFIC	Q2 '13 %
1	China	35,0%	33,0%
2	Indonesia	20,0%	38,0%
3	United States	11,0%	6,9%
4	Taiwan	5,2%	2,5%
5	Russia	2,6%	1,7%
6	Brazil	2,1%	1,4%
7	India	1,9%	2,0%
8	Romania	1,7%	1,0%
9	South Korea	1,2%	0,9%
10	Venezuela	1,1%	0,6%
:	**Other**	**17,0%**	**11,0%**

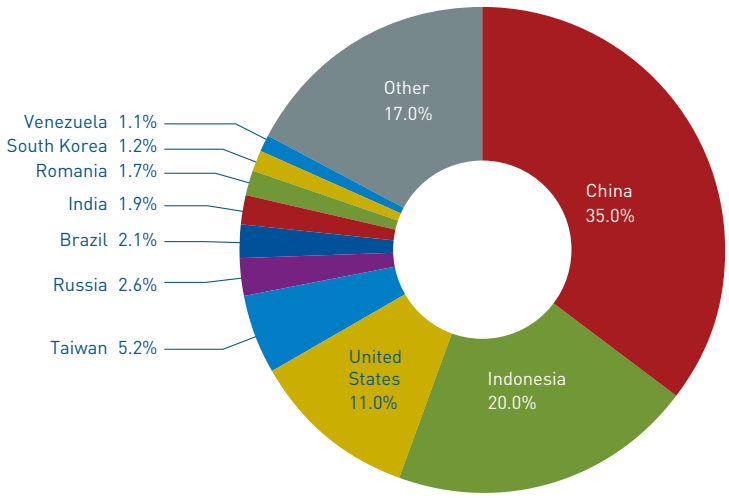


FIGURE 2.25: CYBER ATTACK TRAFFIC, PER COUNTRY OF ORIGIN (BY SOURCE IP ADDRESS, NOT ATTRIBUTION) IN 2013[116]

Economic Indicators

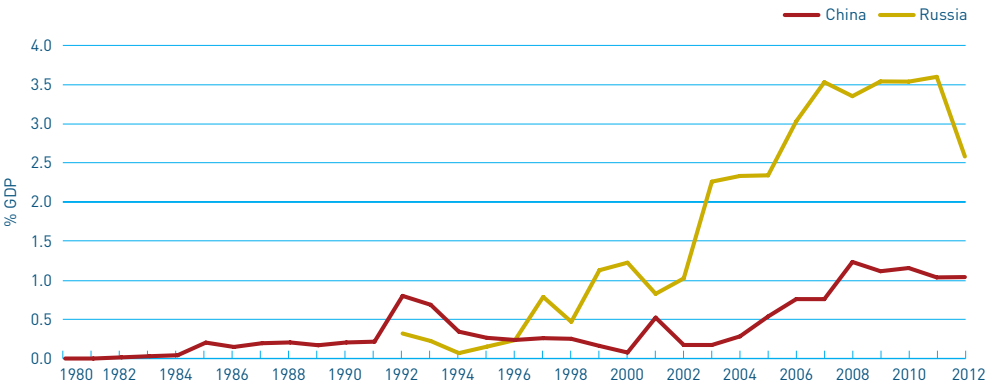


FIGURE 2.26: NET FDI OUTFLOWS IN CHINA AND RUSSIA (1980-2012), IN % GDP. SOURCE: UNITED NATIONS[117]

Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) reflect each country's ability to aggregate investments from abroad, and its capacity to invest from its own economy to the rest of the world, thereby adding to its power base. Figure 2.26 provides some indication of the 'net' investment flows for China and Russia. We note that both China and – even to a larger extent – Russia have been very assertive investors abroad – confirming the assertiveness hypothesis as defined in this chapter.

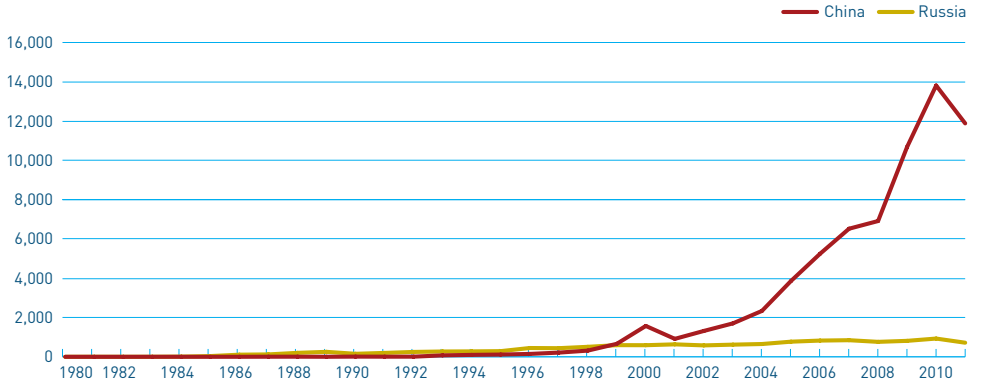


FIGURE 2.27: PATENT APPLICATION FILES – CHINA AND RUSSIA (1980-2011) FILED UNDER THE PATENT CO-OPERATION TREATY (PCT). SOURCE: OECD[118]

Whereas FDI flows say something about the relative financial 'power' of a country (which – as in the case of Russia – may also be related to its natural resource

endowments), they do not say much about the innovative forces behind it. As a rough indicator of the latter, Figure 2.27 shows the number of patents that have been filed. What is striking is that whereas Russia has performed poorly, China has not only become the world's main manufacturing hub, but also an impressive innovation powerhouse.

Diplomatic Indicators

Vetoes to UN Security Council resolutions

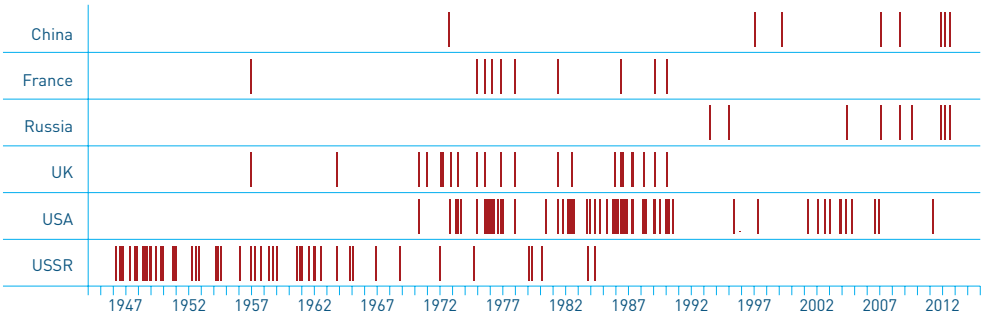


FIGURE 2.28: VETOES IN THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

Figure 2.28 indicates an increasing diplomatic assertiveness of these two countries in the UN Security Council, as expressed in the amount of vetoes they have issued. We notice that the US has been active throughout this period (and that the European permanent members have been significantly less so), but that China and Russia have been wielding this instantiation of diplomatic power significantly more in the past decade.

2.6 Conclusions & Security Implications

This paper is about assertiveness, defined broadly as either a rhetorical or behavioral increase in the way a country asserts its power in the international system. It is not about China-Western, Russia-Western or China-Russian relations. It is not about the Chinese and Russian military build-ups and their implications for those regions or for the world. Nor is it about the deeper motivations for this increased assertiveness and how those could be addressed – whether by China itself or by outsiders. All of these are areas of investigation that can and should be further explored. But the aim of this study, one of HCSS' four contributions to the 2013-2014 Dutch 'Strategic Monitor', was to take a closer evidence-based look at various allegations of increased great power assertiveness by two of the world's current great powers: China and Russia.

We could also have looked at other great powers that have displayed assertiveness over these past decades – in some cases arguably even more than the two powers that are the subject of this chapter. But we focused on these two cases because they are widely seen as real or potential challengers to the current balance of great powers.

We have put a lot of emphasis on exploring various data sources and tools, both qualitative and quantitative, text-based and numbers-based, old and new. This is in line with what one expects of a 'strategic monitor': to provide for some systematic and replicable method to keep tracking whatever phenomena one is interested in. And great power brinkmanship is certainly one of those phenomena we should be concerned about. Great powers matter disproportionally in international relations, and so monitoring their behavior accurately and dispassionately is critically important for any attempt to 'monitor' the international security landscape. The debate about assertiveness currently draws primarily on anecdotal and recent tidbits. Our ambition was to use existing and develop some new data sources and analytical methods that could put this debate on a broader and firmer evidentiary foundation. We see this as a necessary first step that may provide a useful point of departure for more detailed explorations of the 'how's' and 'why's'.

In this study's concluding section, we summarize the main substantive findings of this effort and try to tease out some possible security implications.

Main Take-Aways

We find that claims of increased Chinese and Russian assertiveness can be backed-up remarkably well by the evidence. Our study produced some fairly robust findings that are summarized for both countries in the following table.

These tables present the aggregated findings for the different categories, types, tones and levels of assertiveness for both countries across the different sources. The values in the cells (and the associated color-coding) correspond to our definition of assertiveness as an increase in either rhetorical or factual assertiveness. A dark red cell thus represents a significant increase in that type of assertiveness (for that source/method), and a dark green cell – a significant decrease.[119] When we just glance at those color codes for both countries, we immediately notice that there is a remarkably robust consensus across the different datasets about a couple of important findings.

		CHINA								
		Positive/neutral				Negative				Overall
		Overall	Diplomatic P/NRD	Economic P/NRE	Military P/NRM	Overall	Diplomatic NRD	Economic NRE	Military NRM	
Rhetorical	GDELT	-1	-2	1	-1	2	2	0	-1	1
	Scholarly	2,5	3	n/a	2	2	3	1	n/a	2,5
	OffBase	2,5	3	3	1	1	1	0	1	
		Overall	Diplomatic P/NFD	Economic P/NFE	Military P/NFM	Overall	Diplomatic NFD	Economic NFE	Military NFM	Overall
Factual	GDELT	2	1	3	1	1	1	1	2	3
	Scholarly	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	3
	Datasets		n/a	3	2		2	n/a	n/a	
		Overall	Diplomatic	Economic	Military	Overall	Diplomatic	Economic	Military	Overall
Overall	GDELT	1	-2	3	1	3	2	1	3	2
	Scholarly	2,5	3	2	2,5	2,5	2,5	1,5	3	2,5
	Overall	1,75	0,5	2,5	1,75	2,75	2,25	1,25	3	2,25

FIGURE 2.29: COMPARISON OF FINDINGS BY TYPE OF ASSERTIVENESS (RHETORICAL, FACTUAL) – CHINA. CODES: BIG INCREASE: 3, MEDIUM INCREASE: 2; SMALL INCREASE: 1; STATUS QUO: 0; SMALL DECREASE: -1; MEDIUM DECREASE: -2; BIG DECREASE: -3

		RUSSIA								
		Positive/neutral				Negative				Overall
		Overall	Diplomatic P/NRD	Economic P/NRE	Military P/NRM	Overall	Diplomatic NRD	Economic NRE	Military NRM	
Rhetorical	GDELT	-1	-2	-2	0	1	2	1	1	0
	Scholarly	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	OffBase		2	1	2	0	0	0	0	
		Overall	Diplomatic P/NFD	Economic P/NFE	Military P/NFM	Overall	Diplomatic NFD	Economic NFE	Military NFM	Overall
Factual	GDELT	0	0	1	-2	1	2	0	-1	1
	Scholarly	0,5	0	n/a	1	1	1	n/a	1	1
	Datasets		n/a	2	2		1	n/a	n/a	
		Overall	Diplomatic	Economic	Military	Overall	Diplomatic	Economic	Military	Overall
Overall	GDELT	-1	-2	1	-1	2	2	1	0	1
	Scholarly	0,5	0	n/a	1	1	1	n/a	1	1
	Overall	-0,25	-1	1	0	1,5	1,5	1	0,5	1

FIGURE 2.30: COMPARISON OF FINDINGS – RUSSIA. CODES: BIG INCREASE: 3, MEDIUM INCREASE: 2; SMALL INCREASE: 1; STATUS QUO: 0; SMALL DECREASE: -1; MEDIUM DECREASE: -2; BIG DECREASE: -3

The first major finding is that **both powers have displayed increasing amounts of assertiveness** over the past decade, with **Chinese assertiveness increasing noticeably more than the Russian one.** We have already noted that this increase is relative to a baseline that is still significantly higher for Russia than for China. But this finding may still come as somewhat of a surprise to many European observers who still are primarily focused on Russia. Over the past decade, China appears to have ratcheted up both its rhetorical and its factual assertiveness significantly more than Russia has.

A second robust finding is that in both countries (and for most – if not all – types), **factual assertiveness has increased more than rhetorical assertiveness.** We can take some comfort from the finding that **positive/neutral assertiveness still outweighs negative assertiveness** for both countries. But – on a potentially more sobering note – we also have to point out that the **factual types of assertiveness have increased quite robustly**. If we look at the table with Chinese assertiveness, we see a lot of dark red across the factual 'band' – especially in the economic realm, but also in the other ones and in the overall one. In Russia, we see less red (and even – surprisingly – some green), but even in this case which started out with already quite high levels of assertiveness, we still see additional increases in some cases.

If we then zoom in on the military types of assertiveness – and especially the (arguably most dangerous) factual ones, we also notice **a lot of red in the China table – and more 'negative' red than 'positive or neutral' red**. The jury is clearly still out as to whether China, which is still far behind the other great powers (including Europe) on many indicators of military power, will ultimately decide to convert its impressive economic ascendancy in military terms. But all of these datasets show **a rising Chinese power that is increasingly asserting its military muscle. Russia presents a more mixed picture** on this score, although we already emphasized that **the Russian baseline remains significantly higher** than the Chinese one, and that the data we collected stop around mid-2013 and therefore 'missed' some of the more recent indications of assertiveness such as the $700 billion rearmament plan or recent events in Ukraine and the Crimea.

It is extremely hard to claim full 'objectivity' in double-checking the anecdotal evidence about China's or Russia's alleged increased assertiveness that is so abundant in the popular press. But we went to unusual lengths to reconstruct both the 'bigger picture' over time and across countries, as well as the more specific details (which type of assertiveness, in which substantive areas, in which geographical areas, etc.). We

collected very different datasets: the largest currently publicly available set of media reports, the largest currently publicly available collection of official statements, the expert literature written on this topic in the past year, and some carefully selected datasets. Our team included Chinese and Russian analysts. We used both traditional and a few more cutting-edge analytical tools. And the picture that emerges from this unprecedented attempt to assess these assertions is one that is distinctly discomforting. The final section of this paper will try to spell some security implications that may result from this discomfort.

Security Implications

Over these past few decades, direct conflict between great powers has largely disappeared from our radar screens. We always knew these great powers continued to matter disproportionately (UNSC P5, G20, etc.) and that they often quarrel amongst each other. But these disputes rarely involved direct bilateral confrontation. Tensions occurred (and continue to occur) '**elsewhere**': with Russia over issues such as Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan or Syria, and with China over Taiwan, Japan, the South China Sea, or North Korea. They also occurred **over different non-military functional issues** such as currencies, free trade and protectionism, oil and gas, human rights, minerals, etc. To be sure, these are serious issues in their own right, but they are not necessarily ones that trigger direct armed conflict. Especially since these various tensions were, and continue to be, mitigated by some powerful countervailing trends, such as shared interests (terrorism, economic interdependence, 'Chinamerica'), mutual nuclear deterrence, asymmetric salience ("these 'other' things matters more to them than to us"), various bargains/side payments, etc. So the sentiment was, and to a large extent remains, that on balance, all potential challengers felt and continue to feel sufficiently inhibited to engage into too much brinkmanship.

It is important to stress that we see no evidence across our various datasets that this balance has crossed some definitive tipping point. Changes appear to be more linear than exponential. And yet these data do point to some broader trends (as well as concrete facts and events) that challenge that delicate intra-great-power balance. In 2013, both China and Russia have been willing to push their brinkmanship further than at any time since the end of the Cold War. Over these past few years, as our broad attempt to 'ascertain' observable levels of assertiveness has revealed, different types of increased assertiveness (including military ones) may have increased the conflict and escalation potential for – once again – direct armed conflict between great powers. The danger of a 'Cuban Missile crisis'-type event may very well be increasing again (and we note that that crisis did not lead to great power conflict either, although by all

accounts it did come dangerously close[120]) not because of any conscious desire to trigger one (as indeed does not appear to have been the case in the Cuban Missile crisis), but because of miscalculation and unmanageable escalation.

One intrinsic danger of assertiveness lies in the informational fog that such spirals of inflammatory rhetoric can generate. In this fog of assertiveness, it becomes ever harder to discern the hard 'facts' and to put events in their proper perspective. This, in our view, makes attempts such as the ones initiated in this paper to carefully construct evidence-based datasets that allow all observers (both the stakeholders themselves and the public at large) to maintain some perspective all the more important. This study attempted to do that for a discrete time period (1980-August 2013). But the data sources we used (including GDELT and the HCSS Off-Base) are available on a constant basis. We therefore submit that developing a dedicated persistent (near-real-time) monitor for great power assertiveness might be a useful contribution for both policymakers and the broader public.

This study has also recorded quite a bit of evidence of growing not just rhetorical, but also factual assertiveness on the part of both China and Russia – including in the military realm (increased expenditures, various types of 'new arms races'). This raises questions about what this means for Europe in general, and for its smaller and medium-sized countries in particular. Can we just assume as an act of faith that such tensions will remain contained, or will blow over, or that there is really nothing we can do about precisely the type of great power assertiveness that larger West-European countries have tried to bridle in themselves for the past seventy years? Should we start rebuilding a more robust military portfolio to guarantee that Europe's voice remains heard in the global concert of powers? Or should we start (re)building ties with countries like China and Russia? Can smaller- and medium-sized countries, who have such a disproportionate stake in a macro-stable security environment, play a special role in 'letting cooler heads prevail' and in 'putting things in perspective', and if so, what would be required for that?

What does increased intra-great-power brinkmanship mean for our alliances – for their composition and their nature? On the one hand, these new tensions suggest that close and capable alliances of like-minded nations become more important than ever for security and prosperity. But on the other hand, such selective alliances also imply increasing dangers of entanglement in parts of the world that Europe may feel are beyond its comfort zone. Should this comfort zone then be stretched, or should such entanglements be avoided at all costs? Either way it seems certain that these new

dynamics pose additional challenges for military establishments, including in Europe, who already have a hard time rebalancing their defense and security portfolios within lower defense budgets even without worrying too much about entanglements in possible renewed great power conflict. Various major weapon acquisition programs, for instance, appear under a very different light when looked at from the point of view of potential great-power conflict rather than from the point of view of stabilization operations.

Equally important for 'price-takers' (instead of price-makers) in the international security arena: how do we deal with a future in which escalating assertiveness leads to an even greater paralysis of an already extremely minimalist and fragile system of global (security) governance? Not to speak of the political economic consequences of a return to a 19th century European balance of power at a truly global level – and this, in a period where the world is just starting to crawl back from a painful and prolonged socio-economic crisis. Could these dangers possibly even provide more incentives for exploring new-style multipolar management mechanisms?

For the time being, the 'long peace' soldiers on. Its actual dynamics – and its (presumed) robustness – continue to be poorly understood. We observe many profound, observable and seemingly incontrovertible trends that suggest brighter skies in the future security forecast.[121] These trends are often ignored by the traditional security communities. But at the same time, this study – just like the other contributions to this year's HCSS Strategic Monitor – also sees a number of darker clouds on the horizon. One of the major challenges for defense (and foreign policy) planners is to find the proper balance between Cassandra's Scylla and Pollyanna's Charybdis. The security community has lost much credibility because of its constant Cassandra-like insistence on all the thing that could go wrong and its underappreciation of all the things that were demonstrably going 'right' – also in the security field. Many other foresight communities – like the technological one – may have gone too far towards the Pollyana extreme.

We have gone to great lengths – and continues to strive to – maintain some balance between these two extremes. We are now alternating between a year in which we try to present the HCSS Strategic Monitor 'big picture' (including the many strongly positive security trends) and a year in which we selectively – in close coordination with our government customers – select a number of potential game-changers for a more in-depth analysis. We continue to feel that defense and security planners should take both into account. The trends described in this study are perceptible. They require

serious attention. But we strongly caution against the temptation to focus too much on them alone. It is only through a more dispassionate, impartial assessment that we are likely to strike the right balance. We trust that evidence-based analysis can and will contribute to that balance.

3 WHY ARE PIVOT STATES SO PIVOTAL? THE ROLE OF PIVOT STATES IN REGIONAL AND GLOBAL SECURITY

3 WHY ARE PIVOT STATES SO PIVOTAL? THE ROLE OF PIVOT STATES IN REGIONAL AND GLOBAL SECURITY

Tim Sweijs, Willem Theo Oosterveld, Emily Knowles, and Menno Schellekens

3.1 Introduction

Throughout modern history, great powers have been the paramount players in international security on the basis of their constitutive, distributive and coercive power. This has always translated into rights and rules concerning state conduct which include "simple understandings regarding spheres of interest."[1] Over the past two decades, the international system experienced a process of fundamental political and economic transformation. This process spurred unprecedented degrees of interconnectedness of societies worldwide and contributed to similarly exceptional low levels of interstate war.[2] It also marked the dawn of a multipolar system in which both great and small powers play pivotal roles. In last year's HCSS Strategic Monitor, we concluded that "in a multipolar system pivot states – countries that are at the interface of different spheres of interest – gain in importance."[3] A key trend here is that rather than pinning their economic and security interests to one particular great power, countries nowadays tend to interact with multiple great powers on multiple levels. Relationships are far less securitized than in heavily polarized international systems where great powers perceive switches in cooperation as a direct menace to their critical national security interests.[4] This in turn renders today's system of international relations more fluid. States have diversified alliance portfolios and engage in important military, economic and ideological partnerships with different great powers.

Conflict over overlapping spheres of interest of great powers are more likely to occur in times of changing power configurations, whether globally or regionally. Power shifts occur for instance when the relative military, economic or diplomatic advantage of a leading power over other states is eroding.[5] In addition to direct military confrontation, competition over other, more subtle, areas of great power influence can occur.[6] Under

these conditions, states that find themselves in overlapping spheres of interest are focal points where great power interests collide and may clash.[7] The process of a state moving from one great power's sphere of influence into another can be extremely destabilizing, with a great risk of escalation.[8] From Armenia to Afghanistan, from Iran to Indonesia, from Serbia to Syria: states located at the seams of the international system have at various moments in history been crucial to the security and stability of the international system. We call such states pivot states. Here we will elaborate this notion and assess the security implications associated with pivot states in the contemporary international system.

This study is organized as follows. Section 3.2 introduces the concept of a pivot state. Based on our understanding of the concept, in section 3.3 we identify what we consider pivot states. In doing so, we first identify great powers and examine which non-great powers possess strategic goods; then we assess the evolving spheres of influence of great powers specifically regarding the states with strategic goods over the past three decades; and finally we single out those states in the international system that are *de facto* caught in overlapping spheres of influence of great powers. These states are – according to our definition – pivot states. We subsequently offer a brief assessment of each pivot state in section 3.4, including its position vis-à-vis great powers and its potential relevance for regional and global security affairs. Finally, in section 3.5, we conclude with the key security implications from our analysis as well as an assessment of various security roles of pivot states.

3.2 The Concept of a Pivot State

The term pivot state was first coined in the early 1900s when Halford Mackinder published a study in which he argued that for reasons of geography, all states "rotate round the pivot state".[9] In fact, in Mackinder's rendering, the pivot is not a state as much as it is a region, occupied by an important power "with limited mobility" relative to "the surrounding marginal and insular powers."[10] Since Mackinder, the term appears in different incarnations to designate different security roles played by regions and countries which are caught both physically and politically in the middle of great power disputes.[11] These incarnations include "shatterbelts", "belts of political change", "crush zones", "lynchpin states," "asymmetrical states", "gateway states", "cleft countries", "hinge states", "middle tier states" and "second-order states". "Shatterbelts" are "strategically important regions of small and weak states which are experiencing substantial inter- and intrastate cleavage and which have become immediately important to the interests of rival major powers."[12] Countries in these regions have often been victim of invasions by powers encroaching on their

territories through particular geographic routes. "Cleft countries" are countries that host groups belonging to different civilizations.[13] States in "crush zones" are "weak, antagonistic, dependent states caught within the interests of outside larger nations."[14] "Lynchpin states", then, "surround a rival power, so that controlling these areas is seen to be advantageous."[15] Attaching a greater degree agency to these states, other authors speak of "asymmetrical states" which create "turbulence by challenging the norms of hegemonic regional structures."[16] Gateway states are "embryonic states which can accelerate exchanges that will stimulate the evolution of larger nations from which the gateways have spun off."[17] "Hinge states," similarly, are "key states in gateway regions that "take the lead as economic or social mediators in opening up the region in both directions."[18] They can be and often are "change agents" as they exercise excessive "influence over regional and global patterns."[19] Great powers quarrel over these "middle tier states" because they are "strategic territories" that they seek to monopolize in order to prevent them from entering into alliances with other powers.[20] But "while often overshadowed by a great power, second-order states try to avoid satellite status, sometimes by playing off one major power against another."[21] In the latest contribution to this debate the term 'pivot' was reintroduced in order to describe "regional heavyweights" that possess the flexibility and maneuverability to leverage their position in the current international system. Instead of being satellite states or "shadow states" (i.e., those states that "remain frozen in the shadow of a single power") pivot states will be able to "take advantage with opportunities to form one-on-one relations with multiple other governments, playing one off [against] another to secure the most profitable terms of engagement."[22]

Building on this rich literature, we define pivot states as follows:

> Pivot states possess military, economic or ideational strategic assets that are coveted by great powers. They are caught in the middle of overlapping spheres of influence of these great powers as measured by associations that consist of ties that bind (military and economic agreements and cultural affinities) and relationships that flow (arms and commodities trade and discourse). A change in a pivot state's association has important repercussions for regional and global security.

This definition purposively relies on the dual meaning of the term 'pivot', both as a noun and as a verb.[23] In the former meaning, pivot states are critical points around which great powers' actions revolve. In the latter meaning, pivot states can 'pivot', or

swing round, from one great power to another, which they can do passively – merely as pawns in the schemes of great powers – and actively – in that they autonomously shape the security environment through policies of their own.

3.3 Identifying Pivot States

Great Powers

Great powers play a defining role in global politics. Their global reach in terms of interests, military capabilities and economic strength mean that their actions have a significant impact on the international security environment. They are disproportionately engaged in alliances and wars, and their diplomatic weight is often cemented by their strong role in international institutions and forums.[24] This unequal distribution of power and prestige leads to "a set of rights and rules governing interactions among states"[25] that sees incumbent powers competing to maintain the status quo and keep their global influence. In today's international system, there are four great powers that fit this definition: the United States (US), Russia, China and the European Union (whereby the EU is considered to be the sum of its parts). If we distil from this description of great power attributes and capabilities a list of criteria, it is clear why these four powers dominate the international security debate (see Table 3.1). The possession of superior military and economic capabilities can be translated into measurements such as military expenditure and GDP, and nowhere are the inherent privileges of great powers more visible than in the voting mechanisms of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), where five permanent members have an overriding veto. The top ten countries ranked on the basis of military expenditures (the US, Russia, China, France, Britain, India, Germany, Italy, Japan and Saudi Arabia) correspond almost exactly with the top ten countries ranked on the basis of GDP, with the exception of Saudi Arabia which is surpassed by Brazil. Notably, each country with a permanent seat on the UNSC also finds itself in the top ten military and economic powers. When taken as the sum of its parts, the EU scores highest in terms of economic wealth and diplomatic weight in the UNSC. This is followed closely by the US, which tops the military expenditures ranking, and then Russia and China, both of which exert strong military, economic, and diplomatic influence in the international system.

Pivot States: States with Strategic Goods

To identify the key states whose pivoting movements could have the greatest consequences for international security and affect Great Power interests, we created a composite measure whereby the strategic importance of states is assessed by counting the number of military, economic or ideational strategic goods in their possession (see Table 3.2: Strategic Goods).[26]

Great Power criteria	Proxy measurement	USA	Russia	China	EU	France	Britain	India	Germany	Italy	Japan	Brazil	Saudi Arabia
Military Power	Top 10 countries: military expenditure (2012)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
De facto identification as a Great Power by an international conference or organisation	Permanent members of the United Nations Security Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Economic Wealth	Top 10 countries: GDP in USD (2012)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

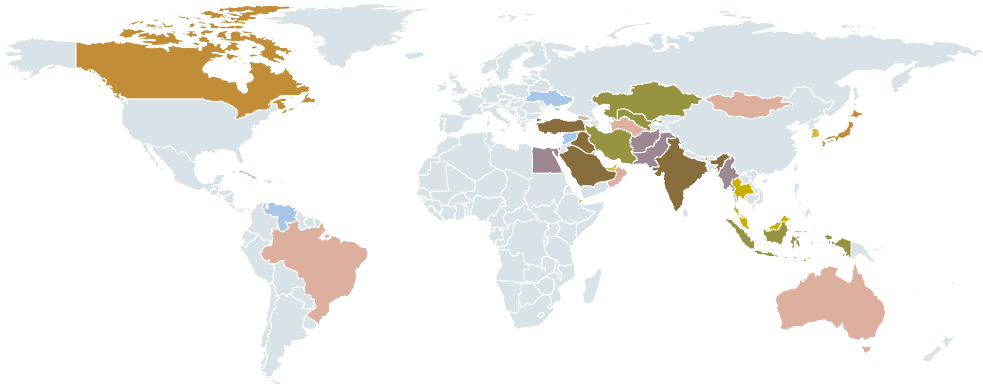
TABLE 3.1: GREAT POWERS BASED ON CAPABILITIES AND ATTRIBUTES

MILITARY GOODS	ECONOMIC GOODS	IDEATIONAL GOODS
Adjacent to great power	Adjacent to SLOCs/LLOCs	Secular sites of importance
Adjacent to theatre of conflict	Governs a key (air)port	Religious sites of importance
Military expenditures	Foreign Direct Investment	Religious battleground
	Foreign Direct Investment as % of Gross Domestic Product	Political battleground
	Resource Rents	Secular leadership
	Resource Rents as % of Gross Domestic Product	Religious leadership

TABLE 3.2: STRATEGIC GOODS

With regard to military strategic goods, the key characteristics that sets a state apart as strategically important to the great powers is their proximity to the border(s) of the great power itself, their strategic location close to theatres of conflict, and their military strength. We score countries on the basis of these three goods. With regards to economic strategic goods, we include resource rents as an absolute figure in US dollars, and resource rents as a percentage of GDP where recorded for each country. A similar technique is used to calculate whether a country has high stocks of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as a proxy of its economic importance. In addition, we also look at whether these countries harbor a key port or airport (in the top 30 of the world). With regard to ideational goods, we consider a series of attributes, namely the presence of 1) sites of secular ideational significance, 2) sites of religious significance, 3) a secular/political ideational battleground, 4) a religious ideational battleground, as

well as whether they display 5) secular ideational leadership, or 6) religious ideational leadership. The final scores for each country is the number of strategic goods a state possesses. The cut-off point for our selection of strategic states is three. This cut-off yields a sample of 33 states, which includes states that are strategically important in only one dimension. Based on this scoring system, countries with particularly high economic, military or diplomatic value in today's system are depicted in map 3.1 and Figure 3.1.



MAP 3.1 STATES WITH STRATEGIC GOODS, EXCLUDING THE GREAT POWERS

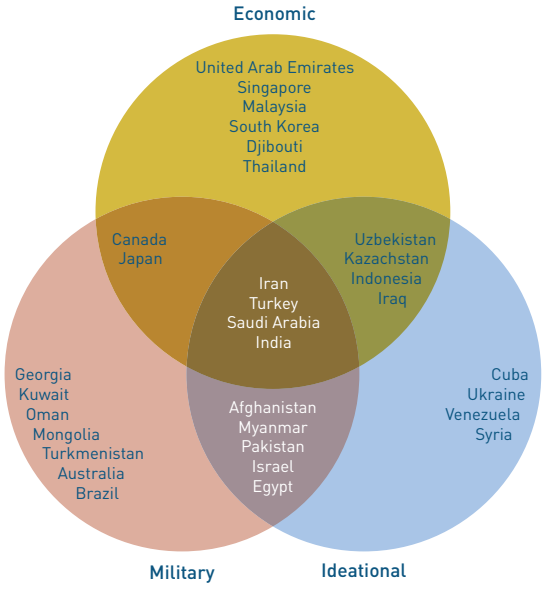


FIGURE 3.1: STATES WITH STRATEGIC GOODS

Association between Great Powers and States with Strategic Goods

Great powers seek to attract or coerce states with strategic goods into their spheres of influence, with an eye towards leveraging, if not controlling, their strategic assets. Although it is rarely said so explicitly, this is far from a novel phenomenon. At the turn of 19th century, Lord Balfour, who would later become a Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, said that "spheres of influence we have never admitted, spheres of interest we have never denied."[27] Over a century later, US President Obama remarked that progress in the Asia-Pacific region depends on "cultivating spheres of cooperation – not competing spheres of influence."[28] Obama was specifically referring to reinvigorating treaty alliances with key states in the region not as "historical documents from a bygone era, but [as] abiding commitments to each other that are fundamental to our shared security."[29] In fact, as nicely illustrated by his remark, great powers employ various instruments to invite or pressure states into their spheres of influence, including trade, aid and investment; economic and military agreements; but also diplomatic "talk".[30] We thus use the phrase "association between states with strategic goods and great power(s)" to put sphere of influence on a more exact and (objectively) measurable footing. We conceptualize the association between states with strategic goods and great powers as a combination of what we call *ties that bind* and *relationships that flow*. Ties that bind consist of military treaties and trade agreements, as well as structural similarities in language, religion and regime type.[31] States use military treaties and trade agreements to forge durable and close-knit relationships. These ties that bind can often be the basis for relationships that flow between great powers and states with strategic goods, which are manifested in the exchange of military equipment, economic commodities, and diplomatic discourse. While arms and commodities both require buyers and markets, strong verbal cooperation between states can both facilitate and indicate close ties. Dialogue plays an important role in both building and consolidating a relationship: walking-the-walk is important, but so is talking-the-talk.

Ties that Bind

Ties that bind express the structural bonds between states with strategic goods and great powers. On the basis of long-term ties, much can be said about whether countries are likely to enjoy a positive relationship with each other or not. In essence, if countries do not trust one another, they are neither likely to engage in close military cooperation, nor to provide privileged economic access to their domestic markets. In addition to agreements, polity (= regime) type, language and religion are also assumed to be indicative of the potential for good bilateral relations. As a rule, countries with similar regime types are likely to enjoy more mutual trust. One of the 'laws' of political

science that democracies do not fight one another is partially a derivative of this.[32] Likewise, shared religion and language are also factors that in general engender mutual trust. The precise proxies for each of the three dimensions are listed in Table 3.3.

DIMENSION	PROXIES	SOURCES	DEFINITIONS	SCORING
MILITARY	Military Alliances	Correlates of War Military Alliances database (v 4.1)	Formal agreements between states for when conflict might arise	Defense pact: 1 Nonaggression pact: 0.66 Entente: 0.33 No alliances: 0
ECONOMIC	Trade Agreements	Hand-coded based on classification by the World Trade Organization	Customs Union and Free Trade agreements between states	Customs Union: 1 Free Trade Agreement: 0.5 No agreements: 0
IDEATIONAL	Polity, religion, language	Polity IV, CIA World Factbook, Correlates of War World Religion Data	Factors of cultural and social similarity between nations	Similarity in all three areas: 1 Only in two areas: 0.66 Only in one area: 0.33 No similarities: 0

TABLE 3.3: TIES THAT BIND[33]

To measure ties that bind between great powers and states with strategic goods, we add up the scores of the ties that bind across the three dimensions (military, economic, ideational).[34] The scoring is outlined in Table 3.3. We then plot states with strategic goods on a distance chart in relation to the great powers on the basis of the strength of their ties that bind and compare changes in their association over time (1980, 1995 and 2012).[35] Each of the four great powers occupies a side of the square: the United States on top, Europe on the left, China on the right and Russia at the bottom. (see Figure 3.2, Figure 3.3 and Figure 3.4)

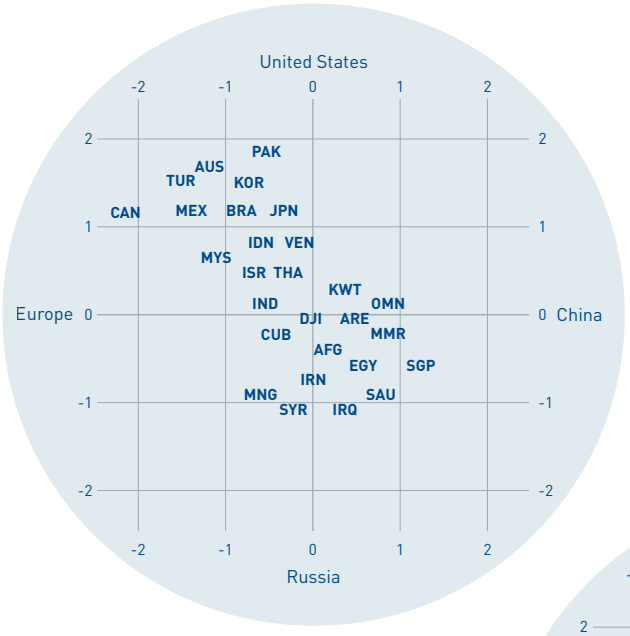


FIGURE 3.2: TIES THAT BIND IN 1980.[36]

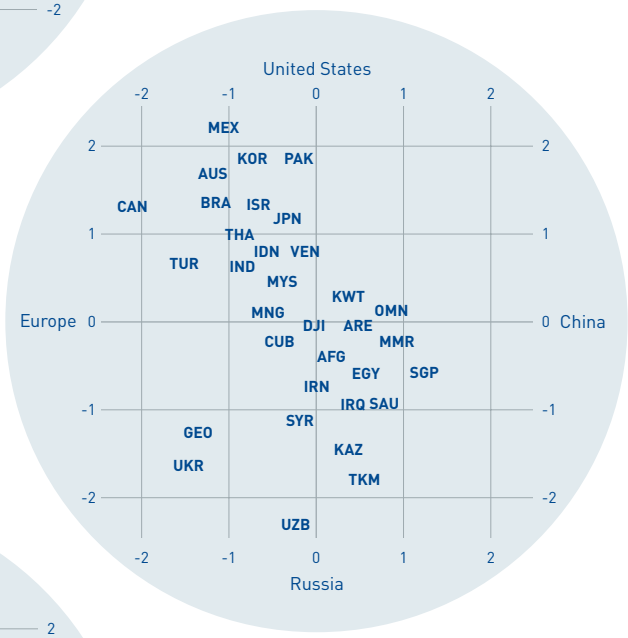


FIGURE 3.3: TIES THAT BIND IN 1995.[37]

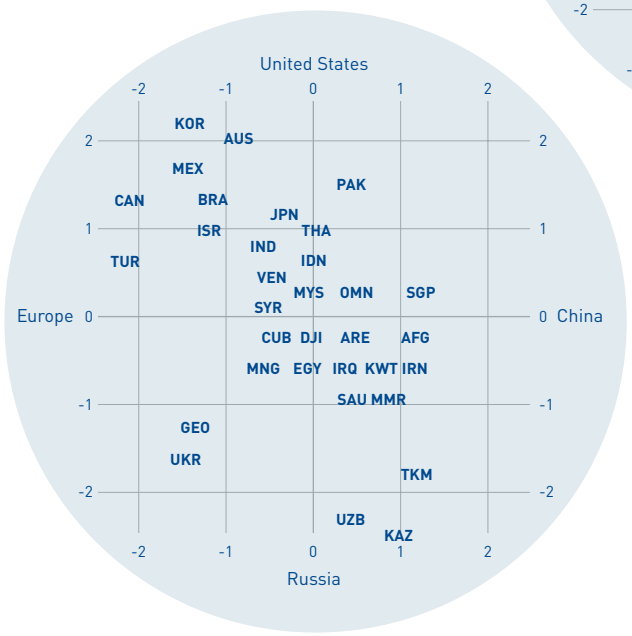


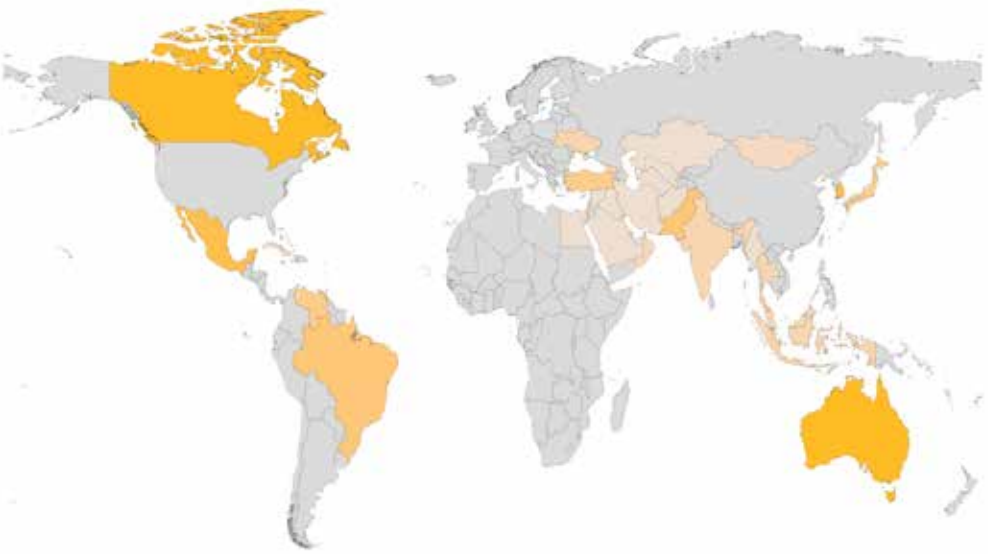
FIGURE 3.4: TIES THAT BIND IN 2012.[38]

A number of interesting shifts in the structural ties between great powers and states with strategic goods can be observed. One is that on average, there is a certain division between those states that gravitate towards the 'Western' great powers and those that have closer ties to Russia and China. Secondly, it appears that the pull of these two blocs – if one can call them such – has only become stronger over time, since states with strategic goods are somewhat more broadly spread in 2012 compared to 1980. Not surprisingly, the exceptions to this general pattern happen to be "shatterbelt" states, those states wedged between Russia and the EU – Georgia and Ukraine – as well as between American and Chinese interests – Pakistan. With respect to Georgia and Ukraine, their relatively strong integration with both great powers is striking, and goes a long way to explaining why they vacillate so dramatically between the EU and Russia. At present, Russia's seizing of Crimea and actions in eastern Ukraine have led to serious tension with the EU. Pakistan's unique situation is explained by the fact that it has great strategic importance for both the US (in relation to Afghanistan) and China (outlet to the Indian Ocean and adversary of India).

In general, where the EU and the US are concerned, the striking development is that they have been able to tie some significant free-trade nations to them, notably Canada, Mexico and Australia, thus creating a bit of a chasm between liberal democracies and autocracies or anocracies.[39] Specifically, Turkey has moved towards Europe due to stronger trade relations between the two neighbors since 1995. Something similar can be noted for South Korea, which concluded a trade agreement with the United States.

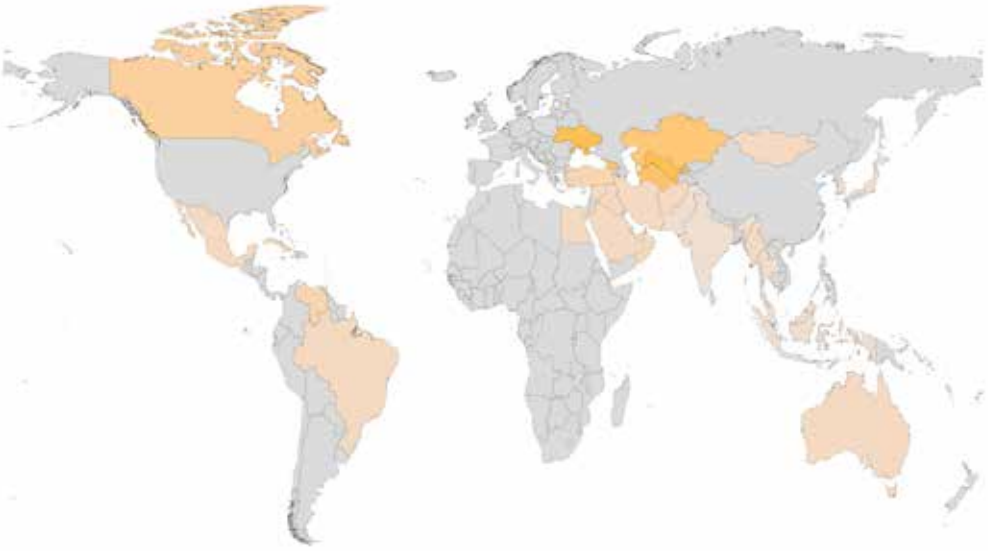
China made only modest headway in the period 1980-2012 in terms of states with strategic goods moving in its direction. The only significant countries having moved towards Beijing are Iran, Afghanistan and, to a lesser extent, Turkmenistan.[40] Russia was able to consolidate its formal ties with Georgia and Ukraine, but saw Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan slowly move towards China. The one exception here is Kazakhstan, which entered into a customs union with Russia in 2010.

The overall trend is that, perhaps somewhat paradoxically, states have become generally more tied to great powers than they were in 1980, when they were more concentrated around the center of the chart, signifying that they were less dependent on any of the great powers.



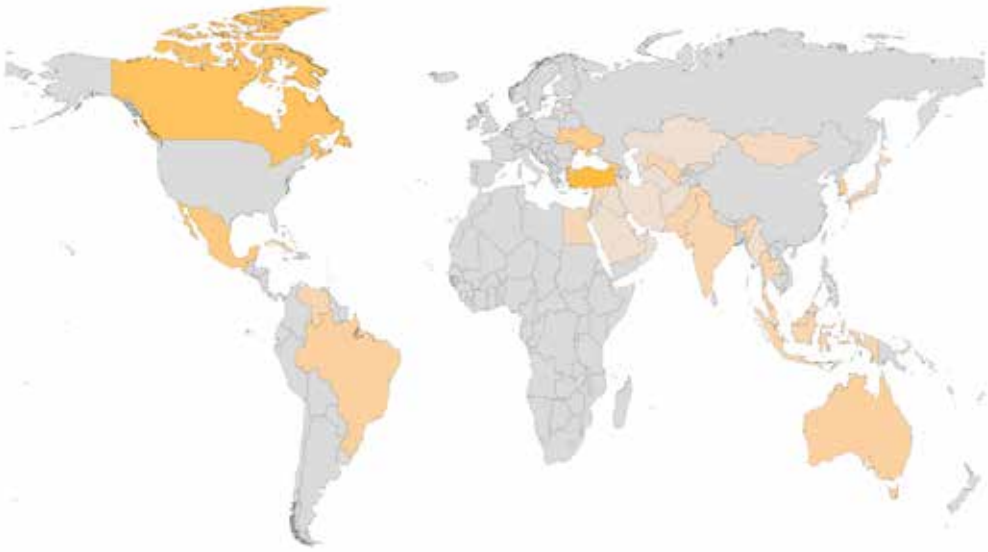
MAP 3.2: TIES THAT BIND FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE UNITED STATES IN 2012 (COLOR INTENSITY = STRENGTH OF TIES)

Standing out for the US are the ties with its North American partners as well as with Australia (see Map 3.2). The most important structural binding factor for the US is shared regime type. As far as countries in volatile regions are concerned, the ties with Pakistan, Turkey and Japan look to be particularly important. The first two are going through a phase of drift whereby all great powers can gain or lose critical influence. In Pakistan, overall influence between the great powers is quite evenly balanced. For Japan, building tension with China could create a volatile situation.



MAP 3.3 TIES THAT BIND FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF RUSSIA IN 2012 (COLOR INTENSITY = STRENGTH OF TIES)

Russia has particularly strong ties with former Soviet satellite states (see Map 3.3). The fact that many states in the Middle East happen to be autocracies or anocracies gives Russia a small edge over the EU and the US. Concretely, Russia (and China) have explicitly set up cooperation structures to align partner countries, with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as the most conspicuous example. In general, Russia tends to emphasize military cooperation in order to forge ties with states with strategic goods, as it lacks both economic clout and soft power instruments. However, it is seeking to expand its regional economic clout as well through the Eurasian Union – a regional economic agreement – which in some ways is another attempt on the part of Russia to tie various former satellite states closer to it.



MAP 3.4 TIES THAT BIND FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EUROPE IN 2012 (COLOR INTENSITY = STRENGTH OF TIES)

Europe's strongest relationships based on structural ties are with Canada, Ukraine and Turkey (see Map 3.4.) Polity type is giving the EU an edge when it comes to countries such as India and Japan. Unfortunately however for the EU, its overall links with the Middle East and Central Asia look to be relatively weak (except for Syria and Israel). In Central Asia, it has to cede ground to Russia and to China in particular.

MAP 3.5 TIES THAT BIND FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CHINA IN 2012 (COLOR INTENSITY = STRENGTH OF TIES)

China has its strongest ties with Central Asia, which are built on several factors; military agreements and polity type in particular. Overall, Chinese ties with East Asian nations such as South Korea, Japan and Indonesia look to be weaker (see Map 3.5). China's solid structural ties with countries such as Myanmar, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran gives it some crucial strategic pathways towards the Arabian sea and oil supplies in the Middle East. In some years from now, this could mean that the existing maritime silk road through the seas of Southeast Asia could be complemented by a veritable terrestrial silk road running through central Asia.

Relationships that Flow

Under relationships that flow, we look at dynamic factors that change year-by-year. Inherently, there is more fluidity in relationships that flow, which are not necessarily bound to existing formal ties. This is not to say of course that ties that bind do not matter. Indeed, countries are more likely for instance to engage in arms sales if they are members of a military alliance, and trade volumes are likely larger for countries that are part of an economic bloc than those that are not.

To measure relationships that flow between great powers and states with strategic goods, we add up the scores of the relationships that flow across the three dimensions (military, economic, ideational). The scoring is outlined in Table 3.4.[41] We then again

plot states with strategic goods on a distance chart in relation to the great powers on the basis of their association score and compare changes in the association over time (1980, 1995 and 2012).[42]

DIMENSION	PROXIES	SOURCES	DEFINITIONS	SCALING
MILITARY	Arms Transfers	SIPRI Arms Transfers database	Number of purchases of military arms and equipment	Arms imports from Great Power to State divided by All Arms Imports State. Normalized with 0 as minimum and 1 as maximum, scale 0-1.
ECONOMIC	Commodities Trade	United Nations COMTRADE database	Total volume of commodities trade between states	Commodities exports & imports to/from Great Power from/to State divided by Total Volume Commodities Trade State. Normalized with 0 as minimum and 0.5 as maximum, scale 0-1.
IDEATIONAL	Media discourse	Global Database of Events in Language & Tone (GDELT)	(Discursive) events between states, mined from over a billion news stories	(Positive discursive events between GP and State minus Negative discursive events between GP and State) divided by Total positive discursive events of State. Normalized with 0 as minimum and 0.25 as maximum, scale 0-1.

TABLE 3.4: RELATIONSHIPS THAT FLOW[43]

There has been a significant evolution over time in relations between great powers and states with strategic goods. In the past 30-some years, the US has been able to largely consolidate its relations with key states with strategic goods. The EU saw its overall relative influence dwindle, although it is still in the lead. Over the same period, Russia has been stagnant and China rising. But these trends have not necessarily translated into strategic states more firmly aligning with the Western powers, the EU and the US (see Figure 3.6, Figure 3.77 and Figure 3.88). In fact, more states have moved or are increasingly moving into a pivoting position, as is illustrated in figure 3.5 by the lines gradually converging over time. In this respect, the declining influence of the EU is reflected in the fact that countries such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey moved away from Europe. The most poignant development however is the rise of China, which is mostly because it has dramatically increased its trade volumes with several states with strategic goods, in particular some close neighbors in Central Asia, Southeast Asia and, to a lesser extent, the Middle East.

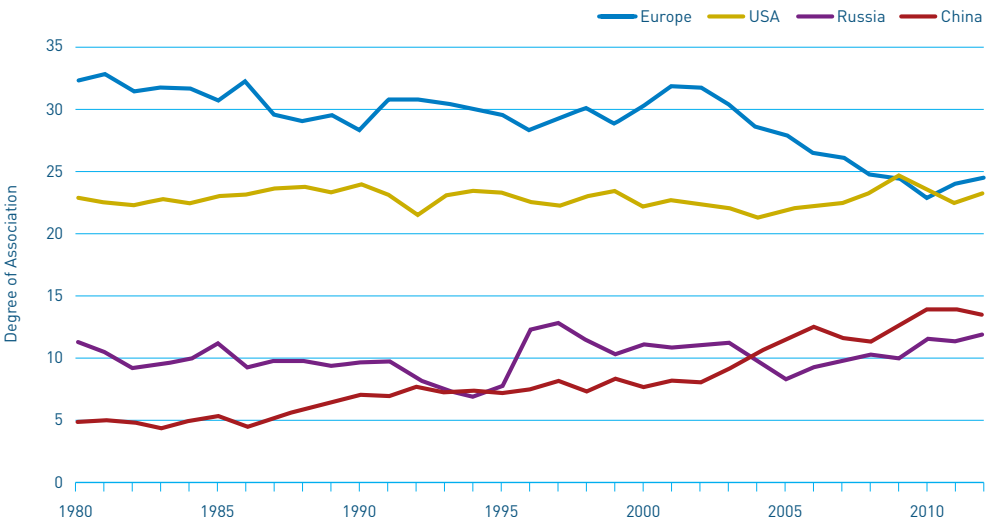


FIGURE 3.5: DEGREE OF ASSOCIATION OF THE GREAT POWERS WITH STATES WITH STRATEGIC GOODS.[44]

In various respects, relationships that flow provide a different picture of the associations between great powers and states with strategic goods compared with the ties that bind. The first is that, compared to 2012, China's relationships that flow look to be in poorer shape than its ties that bind. For instance, whereas under ties that bind, countries such as Singapore, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Oman and Turkmenistan are relatively close to Beijing, under relationships that flow, these countries are decisively oriented towards the EU and the US, with the exception of Turkmenistan, which is closer to Russia. The same difference between these two perspectives applies to Russia, albeit to a lesser extent. For instance, under ties that bind, Russia has relatively strong connections with countries such as Egypt, Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and – very significantly – Georgia and Ukraine. However, looking at relationships that flow, all of these countries happen to be closer to the EU and the US than to Russia, the exception being Ukraine, which is only somewhat closer to the EU in this regard. Conversely, several strategic states happen to be closer to Russia on the basis of relationships that flow than ties that bind. Significantly, these include India, Indonesia and Syria.

Multiple states with strategic goods underwent a significant evolution in their relationships that flow with the great powers between 1980 and 2012. The most significant pivoted states include Georgia, which moved resolutely away from Russia towards the EU and the US, as well as Afghanistan, which pivoted from Russia towards the United States. Other states, such as Egypt and Turkey, have remained fairly stable in their relations with both the EU and the US. A significant pivot away

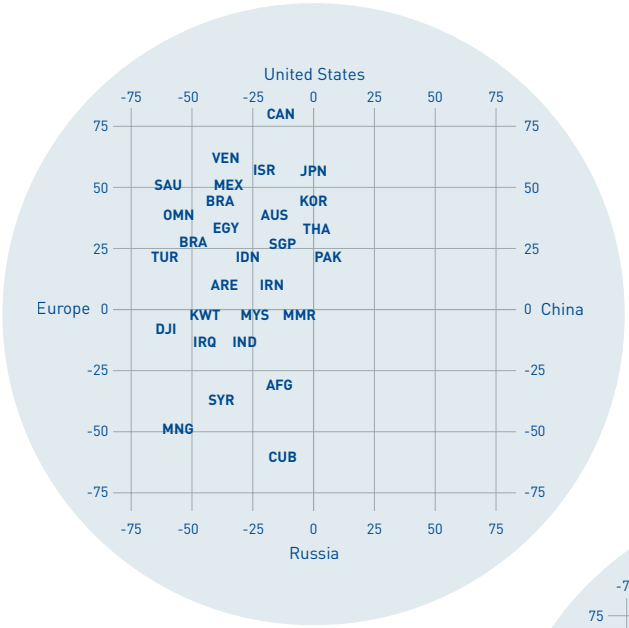


FIGURE 3.6: RELATIONSHIPS THAT FLOW IN 1980.[45]

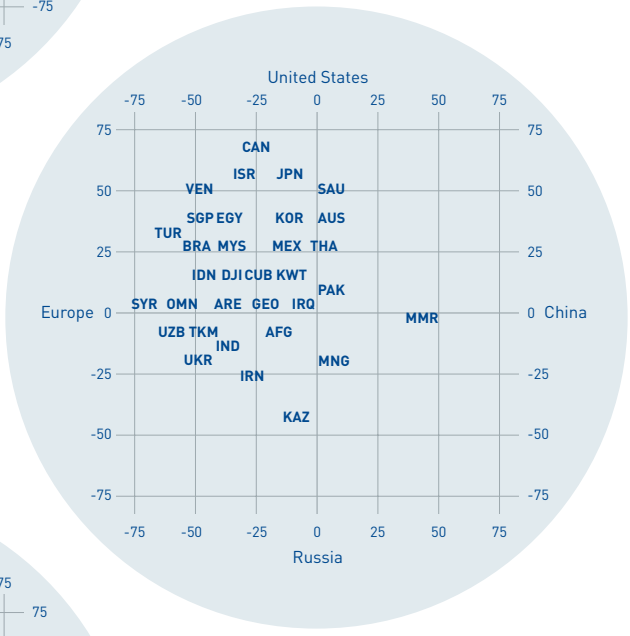


FIGURE 3.7: RELATIONSHIPS THAT FLOW IN 1995.[46]

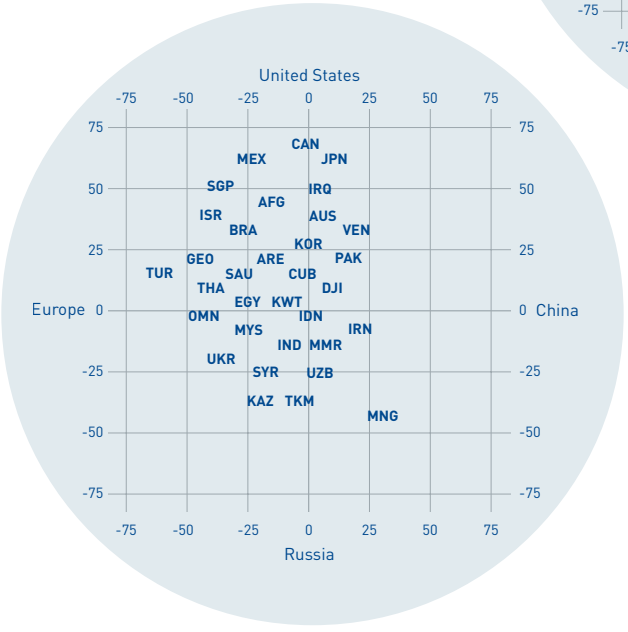


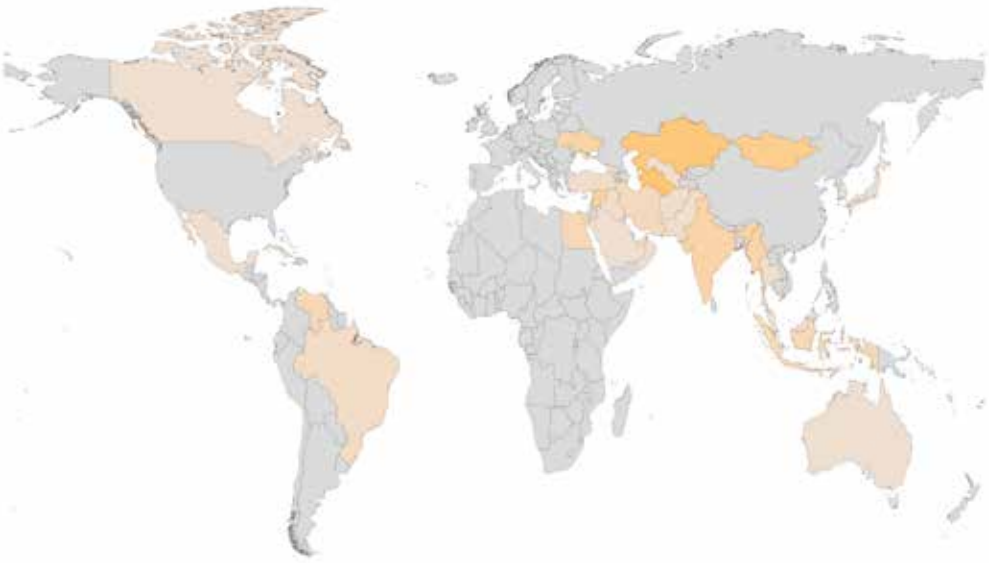
FIGURE 3.8: RELATIONSHIPS THAT FLOW IN 2012.[47]

from the Western great powers was made by Iran, whereby it aligned itself first with Russia, and more towards China in particular.

For each of the great powers, spheres of interest can be illustrated on the basis of relationships that flow in 2012 indicating the strength of bilateral association with each of the states with strategic goods.

MAP 3.6 RELATIONSHIPS THAT FLOW IN 2012 FOR THE US (COLOR INTENSITY = STRENGTH OF RELATIONS)

For the United States, its strong ties with NAFTA counterparts stand out (see Map 3.6). Overseas, American relations with Iraq (despite its withdrawal towards the end of 2011) and Afghanistan catch the eye in the greater Middle East region, as do its relationships with Egypt and Israel, both of which owe much to arms transfers. Otherwise, the US enjoys strong relations with Japan and Australia, confirming the solidity of their respective associations. In some respects, the US has an opportunity to make significant strides when it comes to countries such as India and Indonesia. The two south Asian giants, both among the largest economies and democracies in the world, prove to be studiously non-aligned. However, the game changer from the American perspective would be Iran. A change of government in Tehran could not only lead to vastly improved relations with the US, but also give it a solid foothold at the crossroads of the Middle East and Central Asia, in particular in view of its relatively strong ties with Iraq and Afghanistan.



MAP 3.7 RELATIONSHIPS THAT FLOW IN 2012 FOR RUSSIA (COLOR INTENSITY = STRENGTH OF RELATIONS)

Russia enjoys singularly strong relations with the former Soviet satellite states (see Map 3.7). For countries such as Kazakhstan or Turkmenistan, this is a clear reflection of the comparably strong ties that bind. However, relations with countries such as Ukraine and Georgia are much more ambivalent, in the sense that on the basis of relationships that flow, they are further removed from Russia than one would expect. Indeed, Georgia has effectively pivoted away altogether. However, beyond the former Soviet sphere, Russia has managed to create relatively strong relations with both India and Indonesia, much of it based on arms transfers.

MAP 3.8 RELATIONSHIPS THAT FLOW IN 2012 FOR THE EU (COLOR INTENSITY = STRENGTH OF RELATIONS)

For the EU, no clear pattern of relations with states with strategic goods emerges in the sense that its relations with immediate neighbors are not stronger than those in, say, South America or Asia (see Map 3.8). At present, the states tied most closely to the EU on the basis of trade and verbal cooperation are Turkey, Oman and Israel. However, the even spread of relationships that flow also give the EU and edge in other states. For instance, the EU is the strongest partner with Malaysia, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Georgia, in spite of the fact that the ties that bind to these countries are on average weaker.

MAP 3.9 RELATIONSHIPS THAT FLOW IN 2012 FOR CHINA (COLOR INTENSITY = STRENGTH OF RELATIONS)

China's relationships that flow are the weakest of all the great powers, and the few countries with which it does enjoy decent relations all happen to be neighboring countries with the exception of Iran (see Map 3.9). This demonstrates that in spite of the strong forays of China beyond its own neighborhood, it is yet to enjoy strong trade relations and verbal cooperation with countries such as Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Australia. However, there are many indications that China is on its way to achieve exactly that, and it is thus likely that China will soon be catching up with the EU and the US in forging solid relations with states with strategic goods across the world.

To conclude, trade ties between Europe and strategic states in Latin America appear to be stronger than one would think when looking only at ties that bind. Secondly, in Asia ties that bind appear to be a rather good reflection of where goods are being traded between states with strategic goods and the great powers, in particular where Russia and China are concerned. Taken together, a comparison of ties that bind and the relationships that flow perspectives shows that while on average, the influence of the great powers in the states with strategic goods is fairly evenly balanced in terms of formal ties, when it comes to exchange of goods and verbal cooperation, the Western powers clearly have an edge – and indeed, have enjoyed such an edge ever since 1980.

The changes in great power-strategic state relations harness a variety of security implications, which are elaborated upon in section 3.5. For the Western great powers, while they still have the upper hand, their combined influence and ability to maintain strong ties with the identified strategic states has diminished. At the same time, their loss of influence has not necessarily translated into a commensurate increase in influence on the part of Russia and China. This shows that there is not a zero-sum dynamic at work here, but that strategic states likely benefit from each other's growth and that of emerging economies across Africa and South America in particular. In all, it can be concluded that in spite of the rhetoric about the rise of China and the resurgence of Russia, the US and the EU remain in the strongest position in terms of relations with key states with strategic goods. Even if some of them, such as Egypt and Indonesia, have moved into overlapping spheres of influence, the fact that Russia and China have – historically speaking – been able to entice few states with strategic goods to their side on the basis of good trade or verbal relations bodes well for the Western powers.

From States with Strategic Goods to Pivot States

Having established the most important countries in terms of possessing strategic goods, we now turn to examining the different kinds of behaviors that states with strategic goods can make in their associations with multiple great powers. When states with strategic goods are caught in overlapping spheres of interest of great powers, they have a greater likelihood of becoming a source of friction between great powers. Both deductively (on the basis of alliance literature) and inductively (on the basis of our data) we distilled four archetypes of association which describe the behavior of strategic states in their relations with great powers over the past thirty years. These four behaviors are *aligning & distancing*, *pivoting*, *pivoted*, and *non-aligned.* (see Figure 3.9)

Aligning & distancing refers to strategic states that are predominantly aligned with one great power. One possibility would be for these states to move closer to (aligning) or further away from (distancing) a great power without necessarily approaching another great power. Because in terms of security implications, alignment with either the EU or US does not make much difference in practice, there are a number of states with strategic goods which we consider to be effectively aligned with both of the Western great powers.

Pivoting can refer to a range of situations, all of which have in common that they concern a state with strategic goods which is not clearly aligned (anymore) with any

one great power, and is moving, or being drawn, into the sphere(s) of influence of another great power (or multiple great powers). This makes a state with strategic goods a pivot state. In this situation, a pivot state might remain in overlapping spheres of influence for an indefinite period, or a pivot state might be moving into the sphere of one great power in particular.

Pivoted means that a pivot state has completely transitioned from the sphere of interest of one great power into that of another. To ensure that this category is topical, only pivots that have been completed in the last five years are considered. Hence, pivots that might have occurred in the wake of the end of the Cold War are not considered as such. Finally, in considering the pivoting and pivoted category, little to no emphasis is put on possible pivots between the EU and the US, since for a number of countries, such pivots are rather meaningless because the EU and the US are as a rule not in direct competition in the same way that they are in competition with China and Russia.

Finally, *non-aligned* corresponds – as implied in the term – with a situation in which the strategic state cannot be considered to be associated with any great power. For our purposes, India is the only country in this category.

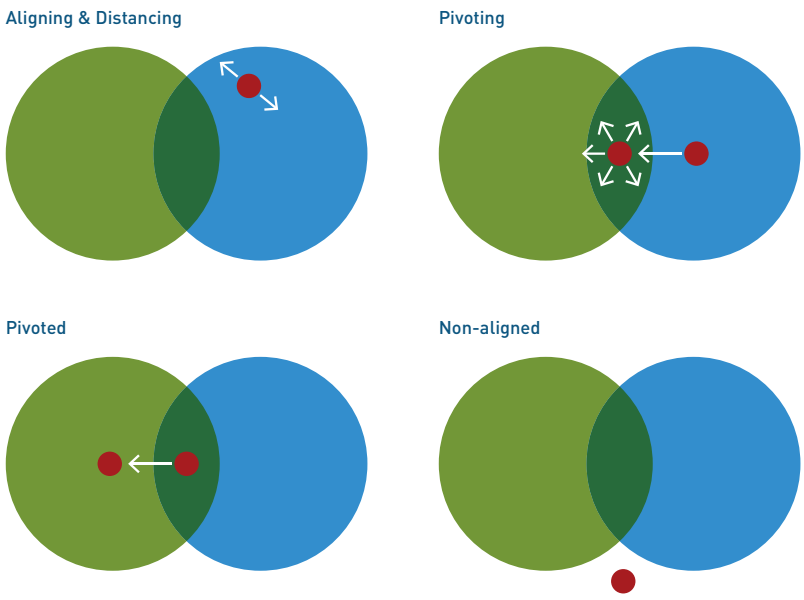


FIGURE 3.9: ASSOCIATION AND BEHAVIOR

On the basis of our dataset of relationships that flow between states with strategic goods and great powers, we subdivide these states into one of these four categories (see Table 3.5).We are particularly interested in those states in the pivoting and the pivoted categories, which together make up our list of pivot states.

ALIGNED	PIVOTING	PIVOTED	NON-ALIGNED
	Afghanistan		
	Australia		
	Cuba		
	Djibouti		
	Egypt		
	Indonesia		
Brazil	Iran		
Canada	Kazakhstan		
Israel	Kuwait		
Japan	Myanmar	Georgia	India
Mexico	Mongolia	Iraq	
Malaysia	Oman		
Singapore	Pakistan		
South Korea	Saudi Arabia		
Turkmenistan	Syria		
Turkey	Thailand		
	Ukraine		
	Uzbekistan		
	Venezuela		
	United Arab Emirates		

TABLE 3.5: STATES WITH STRATEGIC GOODS AND BEHAVIOR

Some interesting patterns emerge here. In the aligned category, we find a good number of politically stable strategic states which have not been involved in a long-term pivoting process. Prime examples include Brazil, Canada, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Singapore and South Korea – all of which, incidentally, maintain solid ties with the US. However, this is not a reason for complacency on the part of the US, given that China in particular is making significant economic inroads in a number of these countries. Because of the stability of these aligned countries (both in terms of domestic politics and their international relations), the security implications associated with these

countries are generally limited. In fact, countries such as Canada, Brazil, Singapore and even Turkey have frequently sought to play the role of middling powers in international conflicts. Turkey finds itself in this category due to the fact that in spite of its generally different religious orientation, it is still closely wedded to the Western great powers. Given the turmoil in the Middle East, Turkey as a member of NATO is still among the more stable countries in the region, even if it is slowly leaning towards China in some respects.[48]

The countries in the 'pivoting' category are very diverse and are often confronted with political and economic volatility at home, affecting great power interests. The reasons why these countries are pivoting are manifold. Countries such as Afghanistan, Egypt, and Syria find themselves engulfed in conflict or suffer from severe political instability. Other countries that are important for economic reasons such as Australia, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, are pivoting because the great powers seek access to their natural resources.

Some countries have begun to function as a pivot as a result of their strategic location (think of Myanmar, Oman and Uzbekistan). Others function as a pivot also in ideological terms, examples being Cuba, Iran and Ukraine. In practice, countries can be pivoting for multiple reasons. For instance, Ukraine is not only experiencing a civilizational conflict, but is also subject of great power interest for economic and military-strategic reasons. What is more, there is no uniform way of pivoting. For instance, while Afghanistan has been in pivoting mode for several years, a country like Indonesia shows convergence of interests of all great powers, and is thus unlikely to move in any particular direction for some time to come.

The only two countries that have made a pivot from one great power towards another are Georgia (from Russia towards 'the West', i.e. the US and the EU) and Iraq, which in recent years completed a pivot from Russia towards the US. This latter pivot did evidently not occur at the country's own volition, as the country had been invaded in 2003 and hosted a large presence of US forces on its territory until the end of 2011.

The only truly non-aligned – though still coveted – country is India, which has studiously steered a neutral course between the great powers. While overtly, its relations with Russia remain very cordial; with China very tense; and those with the US and the EU rather lukewarm; in reality it maintains solid ties with all four. Due to its size and given that it was a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement, India is not likely to choose to align itself with any of the current great powers anytime soon. As a result, it

is in a category of its own. In fact, it is more likely that in the near future, India will itself graduate to the category of great powers, and tie pivot states around it, beginning with some key states around the wider Indian Ocean and in Central Asia.

3.4 Caught in the Middle: Pivot States by Region

Distinguishing those strategic states that are pivoting or have pivoted from those states that are firmly aligned or non-aligned, yields the following picture of pivot states in the contemporary international system (see Map 3.10).

MAP 3.10 PIVOT STATES IN THE CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

The 22 pivot states in our set – i.e., those states that possess strategic goods and are caught in overlapping spheres of influence – are spread out geographically in clusters throughout the system. There are five principal zones of pivot clusters: the Caribbean (Venezuela and Cuba); Europe's Eastern Borders (Ukraine and Georgia); the Middle East (Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Oman and Djibouti); Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Mongolia); and South East Asia (Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia and Australia). Below we describe how these pivot states are wedged in between different spheres of influence of great powers and assess potential security risks.

The Caribbean

Cuba is pivoting, although its pivot direction remains unclear. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Cuba made the quickest pivot in our dataset, when cooperation with Russia fell to record lows, whilst association with Europe jumped considerably. Prior to 1990, the Russian (Soviet)-Cuban relationship was based mostly on high levels of arms transfers. Interestingly, none of the superpowers has engaged in arms transfers to Cuba since the early 1990s. The EU has strong trade ties to the Caribbean island yet prospects of thawing of the US-Cuban relationship should not be ruled out at this point. Moreover, China is ascending. Despite Xi Jinping's early snub of Cuba by not visiting the island on his inaugural Caribbean tour, China is increasingly cultivating closer relationships with Cuba, principally in the trade area. In due time, the US might then face another competitor establishing a strategic foothold in the region, as was the case with the Soviet Union in the Cold War. Nevertheless, this is not likely to happen in the near future.

Whereas **Venezuela** was aligned with both the US and Europe as key partners between 1980 and 2000, it has moved towards a pivoting position in recent years and is cultivating relationships with all four great powers. The US relationship has been based mainly on trade as Venezuela is one of the key oil suppliers to the US. The Russian relationship is rooted in arms trade. Cooperation with the Chinese has increased since the mid-2000s, and is comprised partly of trade, and partly of arms transfers. Venezuela holds the largest proven oil reserves in the world, ahead of Saudi Arabia, and more than Iran and Iraq combined. Under the banner of the 'Bolivarian revolution', Venezuela and its late leader Hugo Chavez played a major role in mobilizing anti-American sentiment in Latin America. Chavez' successor is continuing this foreign policy course. In spite of the rhetoric, Washington remains Caracas' most important partner, ahead of Russia and China. However, recent rioting as a result of discontent over the government's socio-economic policies portends further instability in the coming years, possibly leading to regime change.

The European Periphery

Ukraine is pivoting. In the wake of the Crimea Crisis and major political and social instability in the capital and the east of the country, its overall trajectory remains very uncertain. Its historic ties with Russia are increasingly matched by newly established ties with Europe, both mainly based on trade. The US and China have little material cooperation with the country. The tug-of-war between the EU and Russia has dominated Ukrainian politics since the 2004 Orange revolution. In the first decade of the 2000s, gas deliveries to Ukraine were cut off no less than three times by Russia

for several weeks at a time, leaving large swathes of Eastern Europe with a lack of energy. Tensions flared up in 2013 after President Yanukovych delayed signing a deep and comprehensive free trade agreement with the EU in favor of a large loan from Russia. Meanwhile, Russia wants Ukraine to join its Eurasian Union. Ukraine is currently being torn by different centrifugal forces, directed towards Europe and Russia. The popular revolution that ousted President Yanukovych in the first quarter of 2014 was followed by a silent takeover of Crimea by Russia and the destabilizing of regions in eastern Ukraine. The current crisis vividly illustrates the security risks associated with pivot states whose relations with great powers are in greatly in flux.

Georgia has pivoted in a dramatic fashion from Russia to the West. A former Soviet Republic, Georgia traditionally lay within Russia´s sphere of interest with strong historic ties between the two states. Since the early 2000s Georgia has `looked to the West´ and set out on a path towards democracy. In 2008 Georgia fought a brief war with Russia which, despite close cooperation between Georgian and Western militaries, did not draw other great powers into the conflict. Earlier that same year, NATO had promised that Georgia would become a member of the alliance once it would meet the accession criteria. Following the war, cooperation with Russia has all but evaporated. Meanwhile, Russia continues to deploy forces in the Georgian breakaway territories South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Georgia is principally considered to be important for ideational reasons, and is a key example of how pivot states in overlapping spheres of influence can strain great power relations.

The Middle East

Egypt has had a longstanding association with the United States, mostly grounded in military relations. This association has been slowly changing since the mid-2000s, with Russia recently stepping up its efforts to cultivate closer ties with Egypt through arms trade. Historically, Egypt has occupied a leadership position in the Middle East, particularly in the establishment of pan-Arabism, in Arab attitudes towards Israel and more recently also in the Arab Spring. One former US secretary of state aptly underlined Egypt's centrality to the Middle East, saying there can be *"no war without Egypt and no peace without Syria".*[49] The current domestic instability means that the country is less able to play its traditional leadership role in the region. However, its strategic significance has not diminished, and the eventual political settlement that will transpire will have important repercussions for the region and great power relations alike.

While **Syria**'s historically strong relations with the EU have been waning, Russia is emerging as its key great power backer. The Syrian-Russian relationship is mainly based on arms transfers. The Syrian port of Tartus is Russia's sole outlet to the Mediterranean Sea. The bloody civil war that fractured Syria since 2011 is partly fuelled by arms transfers from the great powers, with Russia supplying weapons to the government, and Europe and the US (albeit reluctantly and in a very limited way) providing weapons to some oppositional factions. Regional player such as Iran, Qatar and Saudi Arabia also play a significant role in this regard. The inability of these powers to settle on a mutually acceptable solution to the conflict in this pivot state is one of the key factors prolonging the conflict. Now in its third year, it has turned the country into a training ground for European jihadists who travel to Syria to join the fight against the Assad regime. If they manage to return alive to their home countries, these radicalized and traumatized jihadists, endowed with skills honed in a deadly conflict, can pose a domestic security risk to various European countries. Further spreading of the Syrian conflict to other countries of the Middle East, including Lebanon, Turkey, and Northern Iraq, can definitely not be ruled out at this moment.

Iraq has pivoted to the United States following the latter's invasion of the country. During the 1980s the country maintained equal trade relations with the US, Europe and Russia. After the US invasion of 2003, Iraq became firmly entrenched in the American camp. The country was initially seen in some circles as a vital strategic partner for the West, as it is large and oil-rich, and based in a region of growing instability. Yet, the country is in real danger of breaking apart: persistent ethnic and religious tensions could lead to a *de facto* and *de jure* tripartite division of Iraq. The Kurds have already effectively carved out the northern part of the country. In the south and center of the country, Iran, through its investments in the Shiite parts of the country, is seeking to consolidate its influence in Iraq to the point where it can determine the outcome of key strategic decisions.

Iran has maintained relations in one form or another with all the great powers except with the United States. The toppling of Saddam Hussein tilted the regional balance of power in the Middle East in a favorable direction for Iran. For military equipment, Iran depends largely on Russia and China. Historically, it used to trade much with Europe, but the economic embargo implemented in the middle of the 2000s significantly dented trade volumes. In recent years, great powers have been tightening the screws and expanding economic sanctions in order to pressure Iran's regime to give up its nuclear weapon program. Iran, meanwhile, is actively shaping its immediate security environment. Amongst other things it has been providing weapons to Hezbollah in

Lebanon; steering the policies of Shiite factions in Iraq; and staunchly supporting Assad's regime both before and after the start of Syria's civil war. The broader ideological schism between Shiites and Sunnis continues to shape relations with Iran's arch-nemesis across the Gulf, Saudi Arabia. Any solution to the conflict in Syria and the fragile situation in Lebanon, runs, as they say, through Tehran. Iran's ideological orientation and its future associations therefore have much broader ramifications. Meanwhile, if recent progress in the nuclear talks would lead to a change of tack in Tehran, this could constitute the largest strategic game changer in the Middle East since the 1979 revolution.

Kuwait is pivoting, albeit between the US and the EU. Following the 1990-91 Gulf War, Kuwait became aligned with the US. Kuwait's relationship with the US is based on arms transfers as well as trade – as are its relations with the EU. Kuwait is the world's 10th largest oil producer, and the third largest within OPEC. With the end of the war in Iraq, Kuwait's strategic importance as supply base for American troops greatly diminished. Today, Kuwait plays a modest but important role in channeling funds towards various rebel groups engaged in the Syrian civil war.

Saudi Arabia has kept its close association ties with the US and Europe, but has been moving significantly closer towards China and Russia as well. Both Europe and the US account for the lion's share of the arms supply to Saudi Arabia, but both also have seen shares of trade with Saudi Arabia fall. Since 2011, Saudi Arabia has been voicing its great displeasure with US policies vis-à-vis Egypt, Syria and Iran, which culminated in its declining to take up its seat in the UN Security Council. It has been cultivating ties with Europe (France) and China, in order to gain more leverage and freedom of maneuver from its powerful ally. Whether this is more than talk remains to be seen. It is noteworthy though that in 2010 China became the largest oil importer from Saudi Arabia while in 2013 the US overtook Saudi Arabia as the largest oil producer in the world. On the basis of its sheer size, wealth and role as custodian of the two holiest sites in Islam, Saudi Arabia is a key security actor in the region. It disperses massive funds to (Sunni) armed groups in Syria and spearheads the anti-Iran coalition also through its leadership in the Gulf Cooperation Council. Saudi Arabia, even more so than other states in the region, will be an indispensable actor in how the regional fabric will develop.

The **United Arab Emirates** (UAE) are pivoting. Although they have remained firmly associated with the West, the UAE have shifted from Europe towards the US, particularly in the military dimension. Historically, they used to trade heavily with

Europe, but as of recent, these ties have decreased significantly in strength. Nonetheless, the country remains a key energy provider to the world economy, and is among the top-5 petroleum exporters. Meanwhile, Dubai and Abu Dhabi are seeking to become the Singapore of the Middle East as a transit hub and a center for business. At the ideational front, the UAE seek to exert influence beyond their borders, vying for influence with Qatar and Bahrain in regional conflicts, for instance through the financing of rebel groups in Syria.[50]

Oman has traditionally enjoyed close ties with Europe. These ties have waned considerably, with the US and China increasing cooperation over the past decade. The rise of China is visible in ever closer trade relations. Oman is geo-strategically important as it is located across from Iran on the Strait of Hormuz, where as much as 20% of the world's oil passes. The country has moderate oil reserves, though nowhere near as high as its neighbors on the Arab peninsula. Diplomatically, the country punches above its weight, also because of its predominantly neutralist stance. In addition, the country has been very stable throughout the reign of Sultan Qaboos (since 1970), with only minor protests occurring in 2011. Just as in the case of the UAE, no acute international security risks are associated with Oman, but the country will be of key importance both for military-strategic and economic reasons.

Djibouti, as a former French colony, has been aligned with Europe ever since it became independent, but in recent years has been in pivoting mode as EU influence has steadily declined. The decline of EU influence can principally be attributed to declining trade flows. Strategically, Djibouti is significant because of its location on the edge of the Bab el-Mandeb strait. It also hosts a major US military basis at Camp Lemonnier, now part of US AFRICOM. Chinese influence in Djibouti remains modest, and is mainly driven by increasing trade.

Central Asia

Kazakhstan is aligned with Russia but moving towards a pivoting position; in terms of economic relationships that flow it is becoming less dependent on Russia. The ascent of Europe is noteworthy, especially in economic terms, as it is Kazakhstan's single largest trade partner. Moscow, however, remains the country's principal arms supplier and the 2010 customs union may reverse this economic trend. Similarly, the slight rise in Chinese influence is interesting, as Kazakhstan together with Mongolia are the only states bordering both China and Russia. At present, almost half of its imports come from China. Indeed, Beijing is investing heavily in the country.[51] Kazakhstan controls large oil reserves. Only recently, Kazakhstan opened up new railways connecting

China and Europe, fuelling much talk about reviving the ancient Silk Road.[52] At the same time, Russia is trying to tie the country into a full-fledged economic union (the Eurasian Union) to replace the current customs union. Kazakhstan is also a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Given its position in Mackinders heartland, Astana also wants to play a mediating role in promoting peaceful relations in Central Asia. However, it is also possible that Kazakhstan will be a lynchpin for future economic antagonism between the great powers.

Uzbekistan is pivoting but its overall trajectory remains unclear. A former Republic of the USSR, it has strong historic ties to Russia. However, Uzbek-Russian relations have waned in recent years, with Europe and China taking over from Russia as Uzbekistan's most important trade partners. Uzbekistan was of military-strategic value to the US Operation Enduring Freedom in the early years of the Afghan conflict, as the US leased part of the Karshi-Khanabad air base in the south of the country. Following American criticism of the Uzbek authorities concerning the Andijan massacres, the US was forced by president Karimov to close this base. Nonetheless, Uzbekistan continued to play a role in the Afghan conflict as part of the Northern Distribution Network improving supply routes into Afghanistan. In 2012, the country left the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization. Whether this signals a shift towards the EU and US remains to be seen, since it continues to be a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Afghanistan pivoted towards the United States, both militarily and diplomatically as a result of the 2001 invasion. Yet it has no major trade relations with the US. The graveyard of nations, Afghanistan continues to play a key role in international affairs, this time because its territory was used by terrorist organization al-Qaeda. Its geographical position as potential transit country for fossil fuels from Central Asia to the Indian Ocean gives it added importance. However, plans for TAPI pipeline, that was to run from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan and Pakistan to India, have been shelved for now. At present, the country's most important trade partners are the US and the EU. China has only made a little headway in recent years. Its strategic importance is underlined by the fact that China, the US, India, Pakistan and Iran all have a stake in the eventual outcome of the domestic conflict, and because of the potential of Afghanistan to become an alternative Land Line of Communication.

Pakistan is pivoting, with its overall trajectory unclear. It has maintained delicate relationships with Europe, the US, and China, each fluctuating but overall showing similar flows. There is practically no Pakistan-Russia relationship to speak of. Pakistan's

critical security role derives from a variety of factors. A nuclear power, the country has been politically very unstable for decades, veering back and forth between democracy and dictatorship. In addition to being subject to persistent intrastate conflict, elements within the state's security services are reported to cooperate with religiously extremist factions, both in and outside its own borders. Pakistan has also been a known proliferator of nuclear weapon technologies. Its territorial integrity has been at stake for decades, in particular in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, in the north-western territory and in Kashmir. In the latter, Pakistan has been engaged in a military standoff with neighboring India, also a nuclear weapon state, for over half a century now. At present, the country is subject of American drone strikes against al-Qaeda and Taliban figures, with or without the connivance of the local authorities. Because of its position wedged between Afghanistan and India, as well as its Indian Ocean coastline, Pakistan will continue to be a lynchpin state both for the US and for China.

Mongolia is pivoting between China to Russia. Economically, Mongolia has developed strong trade ties with China, while arms trade keeps helps to solidify relations with Russia. Mongolia's strategic importance for Russia and China lies in that it has important coal and gold deposits, as well as some crude oil. In addition, Mongolia's strategic location between Russia and China makes it a buffer state between these two great powers.

South East Asia

Myanmar is pivoting. For a very long time the country was closed off to the West. It depended almost entirely on China for military equipment and economic commodities. In recent years, the military government has started to open up the country, toying with democratic principles and engaging in international business, in addition to releasing the government's long-time critic and nemesis, Aung Sang Suu Kyi. While China remains a key partner, levels of cooperation with Russia, Europe and the US are indubitably rising. The past five years have seen some of the highest arms transfers between Russia and Myanmar. In spite of Chinese concerns over ethnic tension in northern border areas of Myanmar, Beijing remains the dominant economic player in the country. Rendering Myanmar with additional geo-strategic importance is its position along the shores of the Indian Ocean, coveted especially by China as a way to bypass the Malacca Straits. In these regards, Myanmar plays a very important role in the China-India strategic relationship. This, together with its future political trajectory, will ensure that Myanmar will be an important pivot state in the years to come.

Thailand has slowly been pivoting away from the West towards China since the late 1990s. The most important factor accounting for China's rise is the dramatic increase in trade. Meanwhile, trade flows with Europe have slowly decreased. At present, Thailand's trade portfolio is fairly evenly spread. Yet, Thailand has been moving away from the US on the military front, edging towards the EU and China.[53] Thailand is an active participant in many regional organizations. As such it is a diplomatic actor which is able to exert considerable diplomatic leverage in the nascent regional economic fabric. However, recent domestic political unrest could undermine Thailand's regional leadership position. In general, it could be difficult for Thailand not to get caught up in the regional round of armaments underway at present.

Indonesia is pivoting, although its overall trajectory is as of yet uncertain. Until recently it maintained strong links with European countries; however the current trend shows that these are diminishing significantly. There is general consensus that Indonesia today is in a class of emerging powers. Current relations with all four great powers are relatively even, albeit up to 70% of trade is done with Asian countries. Indonesia's core strategic concerns relate to the securing of key sea lanes that cross the archipelago, and resolution of its territorial disputes in the South China Sea. In due time, Indonesia could play a mediating role between China and other ASEAN members. A balancing of military purchases between the EU and Russia and Jakarta's interest in US and Chinese overtures in supplying military wherewithal may indicate that Indonesia is looking to promote a position of non-alignment. Finally, Indonesia plays an important role at the ideational front, as the largest Muslim country in the world, one that overall is seen to present a moderate (and democratic) face of Islam to the world, in contrast with some countries in the Middle East. In recent years, that image has been sullied by domestic Salafist fringe groups. In sum, Indonesia is a pivot state *pur sang*, that in one way or another, will be vital to the future security regional environment.

Australia is pivoting from Europe to the US, while its ties with China are steadily increasing. Australia is the only truly 'Western' nation in Asia. Economically, Australia has moved towards Asia, mostly due to raw material exports. In the military security area, Canberra continues to have strong ties with the US. In 2011, the Obama administration decided to station 2500 marines in order to balance China in South-East Asia.[54] In addition, Australia is a member of the 'five eyes' intelligence-sharing coalition, thus sustaining privileged cooperation with the US. In terms of security, Australia has an interest in keeping Sea Lines of Communications through Southeast Asia secure. In that context, it is yet to resolve a maritime dispute with Indonesia and

East-Timor that revolves around potential fossil fuel deposits in the Timor Sea. Because of the ambivalent position of Australia wanting to take advantage of strong economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region but still relying on US security pledges, Australia will continue to play a key 'bridging' role between the United States and China.

3.5 Security Implications

Contemporary international relations are shaped by an intricate, and to a certain extent uneasily co-existing mixture of liberal and realist logics. On the one hand, there are many signs pointing towards inexorably growing interdependencies between states that pave the way to prosperity and peace. On the other hand, there are signs that states seem not be able to escape realist logic: they persist in the pursuit for power. States, moreover, are increasingly drawing lines again; lines with respect to whom they talk to, whom they trade with, and whom they defend against.

But in both the liberal and the realist logic, pivot states are the metaphorical pivotal points in the tectonics of international relations. And they are also – in keeping with our metaphor – where countries and interests diverge, converge or overlap. Pivot states and great powers enter into associations that consist of ties that bind and relationships that flow. These associations are the tangible manifestations of spheres of influence of great powers that slowly evolve over time.

For approximately two dozen pivot states, we have tracked how they sit inside, and then shifted from one sphere of influence to another over the past thirty years. We found that pivot states, situated as they are at the seams of the international system, play a very important role in regional and global security and stability. We then gauged various aspects of their role, in the process of which we have unearthed various security implications. Some of these implications are, albeit not always neatly disentangled, rather straightforward since they principally relate to the strategic goods of these pivot states. For example, shifts in the position of pivot states can, amongst other things, affect military staging rights, create new military-strategic perimeters, limit or open up Lines of Communications, and affect energy supply dynamics.

Shifts in the position of pivot states can:

- affect ***military staging rights***. For example, ongoing public outcry against US aerial attacks in Pakistan might prompt if not force the Pakistani Government to prohibit US use of drones in its border territories. Afghanistan is still dragging its feet with regards to concluding US basing agreements. Non-renewal of a status of forces agreement in Iraq prompted a full US withdrawal from the country, completed in 2011.

- create new ***military-strategic perimeters***. The pivot of the Baltic States in the 1990s from the remnants of the Soviet Union to Europe and to NATO marked a drastic reconfiguration of the strategic landscape in eastern Europe. The future direction of Ukraine and Syria – as of now still undecided – will seriously affect the makeup of their respective regional environments.

- limit or alternatively open up states' ***access to Lines of Communication***. Noteworthy examples here are the Silk Road highways that are currently constructed throughout Central Asia (Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan) enabling Chinese access to the oil resources of the Caspian Sea, which in turn will impact the future direction of many of the Middle Eastern States, Ukraine (again) and Indonesia.

- significantly alter the ***world's energy supply*** dynamics. Saudi Arabia and Venezuela are pivotal players that are currently caught between different spheres of interest.

But beyond these rather straightforward implications, pivot states harness plenty of perils but also plenty of promises which, if understood well, can be usefully leveraged.

A few pivot states energetically mold their immediate security environment pulling considerable weight at the international stage. They challenge existing norms of regional orders and can cause wider ideological ruptures in the system, as for instance Iran has been ever since Khomeini assumed power at the end of the 1970s. But behavioral change can also pave the way to more peaceful and cordial relations between many of the key security actors in the region. Iran's current President Rouhani at times seems to be steering towards such change–certainly in words, if not yet in deeds. Another prominent example is the relationship between Saudi Arabia

and the US, which has recently begun to fray. For decades, the vast civilizational gap between the countries had effectively been denied for the sake of their strategic relationship, but the profound differences in outlook are now emerging as the two countries increasingly differ over strategies to be pursued in Syria and vis-à-vis Iran. Shifts of these pivot states can dramatically upstage the regional balance of power and upset regional peace and stability. Hence, differences in ideological orientation continue to create strategic opportunities which carry a wide range of security ramifications for old and new powers alike.

There are also those states that are actively trying to position themselves as crucial mediators that build bridges and gateways between different great powers or even across perceived civilizational chasms that cleave through the international system. The UAE in the Middle East, Kazakhstan in Central Asia, and Indonesia in South East Asia fulfill or attempt to fulfill such a role in the international system. It is relations with these states that can be cultivated in aiming to affect change beyond the direct bilateral relationship.

Other pivot states are more passively pushed around and pressured into associations with great powers. They are part of 'crush zones' or 'shatterbelts', and are indeed fragile, needy and occasionally also aggressive states. As a rule they feature political instability and low levels of social and economic development. Not seldom are they also endowed with plenty of natural resources. From Venezuela to Uzbekistan down to Iraq: they are found scattered throughout the world. Whatever policy aspired for – whether it is the promotion of good governance or the uninterrupted access to their resources – before setting down on any policy path, it is worth asking whose sphere of influence these pivot states belong to.

Intrastate cleavages often divide pivot states. Such cleavages can be religious, ethnic, linguistic or cultural in nature, and more often than not, they are a combination of all of the above. And precisely when these pivot states are caught in the middle, when opposing great powers push and pull in opposite directions, are they torn apart. Hitherto weak centrifugal forces might suddenly become unleashed. Ukraine is currently succumbing to divisive forces, and Iraq is at real risk of falling apart. Needless to say, such intrastate conflicts have fallout effects far beyond their own borders. Great powers can intervene to protect their interests which in turn causes friction in the international system. At the time of writing, the Ukraine crisis is still unfolding. Russian interference in the Crimean peninsula already produced a significant deterioration in relations between Russia, the EU and the US, which will continue to

affect their relations for years to come. Conflict in pivot states caught in overlapping spheres of influence proves in many cases difficult to solve. On top of their active involvement, outside powers are rarely able to come to a mutually satisfactory, as a result of which conflicts turn into stalemates. Syria is the best contemporary case in point, where the strategic interests of Russia and the US, as well as from regional power Iran, have produced a deadlock with as of now no end in sight.

There is also the risk of abandonment when great powers withdraw from pivot states leaving them behind in not-so-splendid isolation. Before long, as has happened on numerous occasions, the pivot state can come back to haunt us. Afghanistan, for instance, was abandoned in the 1990s only to be used as terrorist staging ground by al-Qaeda and subsequently top the international security agenda following the 9/11 attacks of 2001. The answer is simple: never leave such pivot states to their own devices.

In some cases there is an increased likelihood of great power conflict when pivot states fall victim to great powers encroaching on each others' spheres of influence. Great powers competing over respective spheres of influence, sometimes employ what is commonly called brinksmanship, either to change or alternatively to uphold the status quo. Russia's behavior vis-à-vis Ukraine is an obvious case in point. China's recent proclamation of an air identification defense zone over the East China Sea is another. The current standoff between several countries in the South China Sea, where overlapping sovereignty claims concerning the Paracel and Spratley Islands bring China into collision with Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines and other nations, might lead to a larger confrontation, one that also involves the US. Acknowledging the escalatory potential of crises, de-escalation policies need to be deployed both before and during a potential crisis.

Brinksmanship is sometimes also exercised by pivot states themselves. These pivot states can exploit moral hazards and become 'loose pivots' if they behave recklessly while betting on the opposing great power to come to their assistance. Georgia in the run-up to the 2008 war with Russia is a case in point. Georgia had been keen on bolstering ties with the West and was betting on Western assistance in its conflict with Russia. While the latter did not materialize in the end, brinksmanship of pivot states also introduces a real risk of direct or indirect confrontation between great powers. The solution is simple: do not let a loose pivot state pull you into a great conflict.

Beyond touching on various security implications, we have also examined the immediate and diverse security risks that emerge in connection with them, as the bloody civil war in Syria, transnational terrorism in Afghanistan, the continuing standoff in Ukraine or the immediate danger of great power crisis escalation in the Pacific, all demonstrate. But more than this, in our analysis we have also shed light on the different security roles of pivot states in the international system. Some pivot states are spoilers, others are flag bearers. Some are frail vassals, others are weak but surely not meek. Some should be kept at arm's length; others, whether or not in dire straits, should not be abandoned. And so forth. These roles are crucial for understanding how pivot states can, if not necessarily will, shape the security environment. And it is these roles that policymakers should take a closer look at before formulating policies that will shape our security environment.

4 STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS: BEYOND THE DICHOTOMY

4 STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS: BEYOND THE DICHOTOMY

Peter Wijninga, Willem Theo Oosterveld, Jan Hendrik Galdiga, Philipp Marten

4.1 Introduction

In today's globalized and multipolar world, Non-State Actors play a key role in national and international security. Until the turn of the 21st century the world was very much dominated by states. Nowadays, Non-State Actors such as The World Bank, Gazprom, Al-Qaeda, Huawei Technologies and Transparency International command the international headlines as much as states do, and are often able to decisively influence state decision-making processes. However, the wide range of Non-State Actors also indicates a variety of ways in which they influence international affairs. In fact, the problem starts with the very fact that 'Non-State Actors' is a negatively posited catch-all term that has no obvious delimitations. Non-state actors include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), but equally so multinational corporations, private military organizations, media outlets, terrorist groups, organized ethnic groups, academic institutions, lobby groups, criminal organizations, labor unions or social movements, and others. All wield different forms of power. Some contribute positively to security and stability whereas others actively undermine it.

Last year's HCSS Strategic Monitor concluded that "the state is back with a vengeance, both at the international and the national level." The steady rise of Non-State Actors over the last few decades, and the associated diffusion of power, seems in recent years to be matched by a greater profiling of state actors. Examples are the large-scale economic interventions by governments in the aftermath of the financial crisis, and the way in which states managed to reduce terrorist threats.[1] Notwithstanding this assertion – which remains relevant – it is clear that Non-State Actors have gained in importance in the foreign and security policy areas in significant ways. This study aims to develop a clearer view on the roles and influence of Non-State Actors. In particular, we elaborate on the interaction between State and Non-State Actors, whilst acknowledging that the relative power and influence of State and Non-State Actors cannot always be easily quantified.

This study is organized as follows. Section 4.2 examines in some detail the distinction between State and Non-State Actors, which is more complicated than a simple linear dichotomy. Section 4.3 looks at the drivers of Non-State Actor activities, why these Non-State Actors matter, and how they influence the security environment. In section 4.4 we elaborate on the particular case of cooperative Non-State Actors, generally labelled as civil society actors that may support or leverage the security functions of state actors. For the purpose of this study we will refer to these civil society actors as *non-governmental organizations* (NGOs).[2] Finally, section 4.5 concludes with the key security implications from our analysis.

4.2 What are State and Non-State Actors?

Evolution of the Notion of 'State'

To clearly understand the role of Non-State Actors, we first need to have more clarity on what we mean by State versus Non-State Actors. Prima facie, the distinction does not appear to be very problematic. In traditional political science discourse, states were considered the only relevant players. Moreover, they were considered as coherent actors.[3] In recent decades, however, the idea of state actors and how they operate has increasingly been unpacked, mostly due to globalization, the rise of communication technology and the emergence of a multipolar world order.[4] The nature and extent of state authority and the ways in which a state exerts its authority have dramatically changed.[5] While the state's core task used to be to ensure security and protection for its citizens[6], nowadays the state provides social security, healthcare, transportation, education and many more services well beyond enforcement of the law. For instance, the Dutch spending on defense currently is only about 5% compared to the combined spending on healthcare and social security.[7] While the post-World War II period pointed towards an accumulation of tasks on the part of governments, the last decades have witnessed some reverse trends in the shape of outsourcing and privatization, creating more opportunities for Non-State Actors to jump into the fold. At the same time, the model of the Westphalian State existing in an anarchical world has changed radically in some parts of the world because of the rise of international institutions–the EU institutions being the best example in this respect.[8] The result is that the influence of the state as an actor appears to have declined over the past three decades, in particular to the benefit of Non-State Actors, such as NGOs.[9]

Of course, the extent of the state and its ability to provide security can differ dramatically across the world. For instance, in developed countries, the state monopoly on the use of force to provide security[10] is usually not subject to discussion.

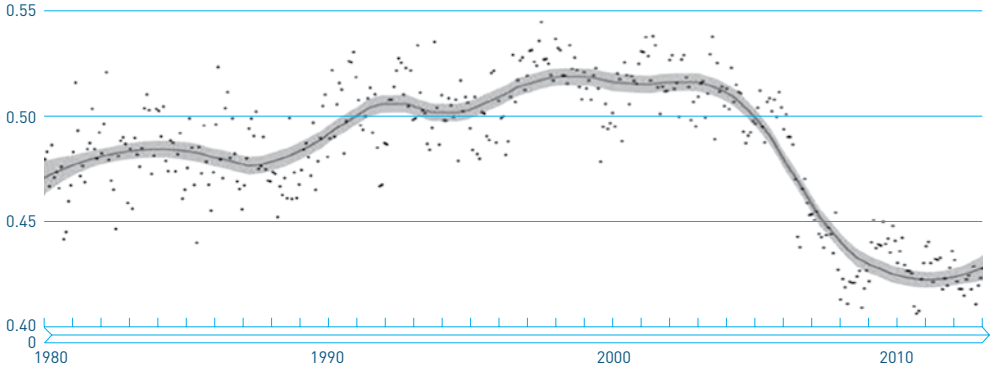


FIGURE 4.1: DECLINING INVOLVEMENT OF STATE ACTORS IN GLOBAL EVENTS, MEASURED BY SHARE OF GLOBAL NEWS COVERAGE (%), SINCE 2000 (SOURCE: GDELT).

In other parts of the world, the very opposite is not seldomly the case. Examples include Somalia, Mali, Lebanon, Pakistan and DR Congo, and perhaps even Ukraine. These are countries where ethnic, tribal or private groups sometimes amass so many weapons and means to enforce their writ that they effectively constituted 'a state within a state'. Even so, the differences between state authority in developed and less developed countries should not be drawn in absolute terms. After all, governments everywhere are subject to global pressures of an economic or technological nature. Their ability to exercise force for the sake of security has evolved in different ways, whether as a result of state failure, of drastically increased costs, of privatization, or of pooling of resources at the international level.

Evolution of the Notion of 'Non-State Actor'

The more the idea of the state as a coherent actor is differentiated, the more the roles of Non-State Actors and the impact they have on societal issues, including security matters, stand out. The kinds of actors that we can classify as Non-State Actors include NGOs, charities, political parties, lobby groups, the media and multinational companies, super-empowered individuals such as 'oligarchs', but also terrorist groups and international crime syndicates, as well as diasporas and organized ethnic minorities. With such a variety of actors, many of which have ties to state authorities, it becomes difficult to ascertain or even compare their impact on state authority. For instance, in a country like Colombia, how is one to judge the impact of FARC rebels compared with that of local human rights NGOs upon the functioning of Colombian state authorities?

In the literature there is a multitude of definitions for Non-State Actors, many so broad or vague as to be of little methodological merit.[11] One potentially fruitful way to define them for our purposes may be by comparing Non-State Actors against the attributes of a state.[12] To begin with, a Non-State Actor does not exercise formal power over, or on behalf of, a given population. However, this does not mean that it has no constituency of its own. Many Non-State Actors have formal membership bases, employees (in the case of large corporations and NGOs) and sympathizers. Sometimes Non-State Actors act as official representatives of designated groups in a country (e.g. an ethnically defined political party). As a result, a Non-State Actor can sometimes be very influential, in some respects even more powerful than a state itself. Secondly, a Non-State Actor does not formally control territory. This is true as a rule, but separatist movements, large companies, or the Catholic Church can in fact be in effective control of territory. Conversely, the state itself may not always be in control of all territory under its jurisdiction, as in the tribal areas of Pakistan. Finally, the cornerstone rule that international relations are built on formalized state-to-state relations is also becoming questionable. Many NGOs now have standing in certain interstate bodies, and are able to conclude agreements with state authorities. Also, states are now entering more often in officially sanctioned contracts such as Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)[13] with commercial enterprises. As a result, Non-State Actors are assuming more responsibility under international law. The UN's *Global Compact* (2000), which brings together governments and multinationals to promote good business practices is one well-known example amongst many.

What these observations point to is that "to be considered an actor in world politics, the entity under consideration needs to possess a degree of autonomy and influence rather than the legal and state-related status of sovereignty."[14] It is emblematic of today's world that power and influence are no longer only determined by legal status and hard power attributes, but also by the extent of an organization's network, by their perceived or recognized legitimacy and by their power to mobilize resources.

Current Dutch Perspective on State and Non-State Actors

In the *Eindrapport Verkenningen*, the Dutch government introduced a 'scenario framework' as a first-order conceptualization of possible future security environments. Two 'key uncertainties' were introduced, one being "will global security mainly be determined by States or by Non-State Actors?" This model presents some issues in understanding the role of Non-State Actors. The issue here is that it suggests a zero-sum perspective where the rise of the one represents an inevitable decline of the other, even if the framework does not mean that states take preference to the exclusion of other actors, or vice versa.[15]

Another problem of the scenario framework is that, rather than focusing on whether or not actors advance the causes of peace and stability or promote conflict and war, the horizontal axis (the other key uncertainty) takes the cooperation between global actors as the central dimension, even if the degree of cooperation says relatively little about security implications.[16]

Finally, the developers of the framework take a cautious approach by suggesting that no single scenario will prevail globally everywhere and at all times, but that in reality, different scenarios will preponderate in different parts of the globe. [17] While this is not unlikely, the present study suggests that in many respects the network scenario is in fact becoming more dominant that the other scenarios,[18] while at the same time the security implications of all four scenarios remain possible. The *Verkenningen* report notes that in the network scenario, national sovereignty, the state's monopoly on the use of force, and the international rule of law are all being challenged.[19] Indeed, in a networked society, various functions of the state–including security-related functions–may be executed by Non-State Actors in some sort of public-private partnership. Power and influence of Non-State Actors can augment that of state actors, and vice versa. As the *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review* of the US State Department put it in 2010 in relation to US foreign policy: "The potential of civil society organizations around the world to advance common interests with us is unprecedented. Non-state actors bring considerable political and financial resources to bear on collective challenges. They mobilize populations within and across states to promote growth, fundamental human values, and effective democratic government. (...) They are indispensable partners, force multipliers, and agents of positive change."[20] Therefore, Non-State Actors should not always be considered as providing a challenge to state authority, but also as an opportunity for governments to improve security and stability.

Another important point to underline is that the rise of Non-State Actors requires governments to conduct diplomacy in a different fashion. Globalization and economic development have not only spurred the rise of Non-State Actors, but also created new ways for actors to interact, whether in informal fora (e.g. as part of transnational coalitions); between non-traditional players (e.g. between businesses and advocacy groups); or through new modes of communication (e.g. Twitter and Facebook). Several constructive suggestions for modernizing modes of interaction were made in the interim report published by the Dutch *Advisory Commission on Modernising Diplomacy* (the "Commission-Docters van Leeuwen"), which, among other things, noted that "[a] "world of networks" has emerged exhibiting a huge increase of and synergies between state and Non-State Actors, as well as subject matters and

channels through which these parties cooperate. This occurs ever more through informal networks, and in varying levels."[21] In its response, the government acknowledged this new reality,[22] and is now in the process of reorganizing the diplomatic service accordingly.

Multiple factors explain how this role of Non-State Actors in international relations and global security has come about. In this study, we will elaborate on this and suggest some ways for governments to engage with Non-State Actors, both cooperative and non-cooperative ones.

4.3 Non-State Actors in World Affairs

Drivers of Non-State Actor Activity

There is nothing accidental about the rise of Non-State Actors. The first causal factor is the emergence of a multipolar world order. Simply put, the presence of multiple centers of power and influence creates more opportunities for Non-State Actors to play an international or even global role. For instance, while during the Cold War large companies often encountered obstacles when operating in countries that belonged to the sphere of influence of the other superpower, such restrictions rarely exist today. The same applies for NGOs, many of which today enjoy a global presence. This is not a one-way-street, however, but rather a mutually reinforcing development. The global rise of Non-State Actors has undoubtedly contributed to further increase the multipolar character of the world order. What is more, since the relative power of single countries has decreased, they are generally less able to control Non-State Actor activities. Transnational terrorism and crime are only two examples in kind.

A second, closely related factor is globalization. The past two decades have been dominated by free-market thinking. Many large corporations have benefited from the multipolar world and the opportunities to amass capital and develop a global reach. More specifically, globalization has also allowed companies from the 'Global South'[23] to become very prominent worldwide. India's Tata and China's Huawei are well known examples. But globalization has also affected NGOs: they have enjoyed more funding opportunities over the past decades, and only saw their prospects diminish during the global economic recession starting in 2008.[24] A particular kind of NGO that benefited from globalization is charities, enabling wealthy individuals to dominate the aid sector with their foundations, examples being the Gates Foundation, the Clinton Foundation and the Netherlands-based INGKA Foundation, established by IKEA founder Ingvar Kamprad.

Thirdly, the third wave of democratization has contributed to more Non-State Actor activity, in particularly at the local level. In essence, when more people around the world get a voice, they also have (and frequently take) the opportunity to organize themselves, thus giving rise to an emergent civil society made up of countless civil associations.

A fourth key development is the continuous improvement of information and communication technology (ICT) and its rapid dissemination around the world. ICT is instrumental in enabling groups to organize themselves, whether at the local, national or global level, as well as for funding, procurement and dissemination purposes. As one observer noted: "The development of communication technologies in particular, allow[s] better organization of NGOs, their coordination worldwide, and more effective advocacy."[25] But technology can also instigate social change. Some visible examples have included the revolution driven by mobile texting in the Philippines in 2001 that brought down President Estrada, and of course the revolution in Egypt in 2011 that saw President Mubarak ousted, in which social online networks such as Facebook played an instrumental role.[26] In the same vein, ICT allows aggressive Non-State Actors, such as transnational criminal and terrorist organizations, to similarly enjoy the benefits of globalized communications as do recognized ideational NGOs.

Finally, changes at the normative level have helped to bring new Non-State Actors into existence. Akin to what psychologist Steven Pinker calls the "Rights revolution"[27], the idea is a growing global awareness of the needs and concerns of people, coupled with increasingly low tolerance for (perceived) injustice or suffering. This awareness has become a catalyst for grassroots action channeled through civil society organizations.[28]

However, while many of these drivers have given impetus to the growth of Non-State Actors, they have also presented some challenges. For instance, Non-State Actors can be vehicles for enhancing the legitimacy of constituencies in civil society, but the fact that Non-State Actors often lack a formal mandate puts their perceived legitimacy on shaky ground.[29] Also, funding and accountability imperatives can limit an Non-State Actor's ability to operate.[30] Third, Non-State Actors often play an important role in terms of collecting and disseminating information. However, the proliferation of Non-State Actors combined with the ubiquity of means of communication may cause information overload on the part of information recipients, whether they be governments, citizens or other actors. The resulting competition for attention may potentially lead to perverse or unintended consequences, like the fact that the message that is heard is the one that is communicated best, not the one that is the

most important. And last but certainly not least, states and international organizations have only just begun to understand the impetus of globalization on transnationally operating aggressive Non-State Actors.

How Non-State Actors Affect the International Environment

The rise of Non-State Actors and changes in the international order are closely intertwined. While the emergence of Non-State Actors can to a significant extent be attributed to changes in the international political arena, Non-State Actors have helped to further change these structures in turn. Indeed, "[t]he real story is not the proliferation of NGOs, but how these organizations have effectively networked and mobilized their members to reshape world politics."[31] It is therefore very likely that in the decades to come, Non-State Actors and states will jointly be setting the parameters in the international arena.

Behind these developments is not just a reconfiguration of sovereignty, important though that is.[32] The most important factor is the acceleration of change and the complexity of an increasingly connected world. The ability of states to anticipate and respond to emerging global and local developments is necessarily limited, and willingly or unwillingly leave room for other actors to arise and respond. In turn, the rise of Non-State Actors leads to more complexity, creating more uncertainty in the process.[33]

More than ever, we see a multiple-level world emerging that in many respects challenges the idea suggested by the *Verkenningen* report of scenarios dominated by either states *or* by Non-State Actors. In contrast, the *Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy* (WRR) wrote in its report *Attached to the World* that "[t]oday's world can best be described as hybrid in nature. On the one hand, there is the familiar world of geopolitics and nation states. That world is currently going through a shift in the balance of power towards the East. On the other hand, there is the 'network world', populated not only by states, but increasingly also by Non-State Actors. State borders present virtually no obstacle to these networks."[34] The Council went on to say that "[p]arallel to this situation, (...) we are witnessing the rise of a network-world of international relations. This is characterized by an explosive increase in the number of Non-State Actors, topics, and channels of cooperation; such channels may be old and formal organizations, but increasingly they tend to be informal networks."[35]

Of course, one should be careful not to draw too rigid dividing lines between an 'old' state-based order and a 'new' network-based order. Networks between all kinds of stakeholders have existed for centuries – think of networks among international

bankers or even trade networks stretching back to the days of the historic Silk Road to China. States will not wither away but will adapt to new circumstances. What is new, however, is that the pace at which networks develop, proliferate and overlap will only increase, whereby formalization of linkages between actors will more likely be a burden than an asset. The more nimbly one can operate, the better. For instance, terrorist and criminal networks can develop very rapidly given the opportunity, as we have seen in the Sahel countries but also in Central Asia, Iraq, and Syria.

Another misconception to avoid is to think of networks as a panacea to cure the ills associated with international interactions conducted by states, such as lack of transparency and lack of representation. As the historian Mazower recently wrote: "Networks (...) sounds equalizing and youthful, [yet] networks exist in many forms, and many of them are too opaque and unrepresentative to any collective body."[36] These problems can arise from the fact that many networks handle issues that are very technical, making accountability less meaningful. The opacity of networks is also an inherent advantage for aggressive Non-State Actors such as transnational criminal networks. It allows them to engage in human trafficking, drug trading, illicit arms trade, all of which could support and fuel instability and insurgency in fragile zones--and therewith, facilitate terrorist activity.[37] In recognition of the threat of transnational crime and its links with terrorism, the UN adopted a convention calling upon countries to combat such activity.[38]

In terms of exercising power, increasingly different modes of power will be applied in different fashions. Next to hard military power, soft power on the basis of "reputation, cultural attractiveness, legitimacy and lawfulness" will become a central attribute in itself.[39] In a world of networks, reputation becomes a highly prized asset. NGOs can play an important role in gaining and applying 'reputation' as an instrument for advancing national interests. Conversely, legitimacy is also a valuable asset, one that NGOs that lack public accountability would like to benefit from when interacting with government agencies. Furthermore, in a world where normative aspects are becoming more central, lawfulness also provides states with a means of power, in particular if states continue to define the rule-based order framed in the language of international law.

These same soft-power elements can also make a difference when it comes to engaging aggressive Non-State Actors. For instance, they constitute the right elements for a veritable "hearts and minds" strategy. What is more, it can also be the basis for what the US Department of State calls *community diplomacy*, which entails "building networks of contacts that can operate on their own to advance objectives

consistent with our interests; and second, showcasing through particular events [American] commitment to common interests and universal values."[40]

Analysts find it very difficult to measure the influence of Non-State Actors. The most obvious way is to simply count their numbers.[41] Even if size, reach or significance of Non-State Actors are taken into account,[42] such a count in itself does not say much about the nature of the global order, i.e. whether it is networked or fragmented, and whether Non-State Actors themselves may be fragmenting.[43]

The effect of their rise is visible when their participation in world events is gauged compared with state actors. In Figure 4.2 we see a slow but steady decline of the recorded activities of state actors as compared to those of Non-State Actors. Only in recent years does state activity appear to be on the rise again, although it is too early to tell whether this recovery will continue. Factors such as the decline of terrorist violence and government intervention over the course of the financial crisis partly account for the modest resurgence of state activity.

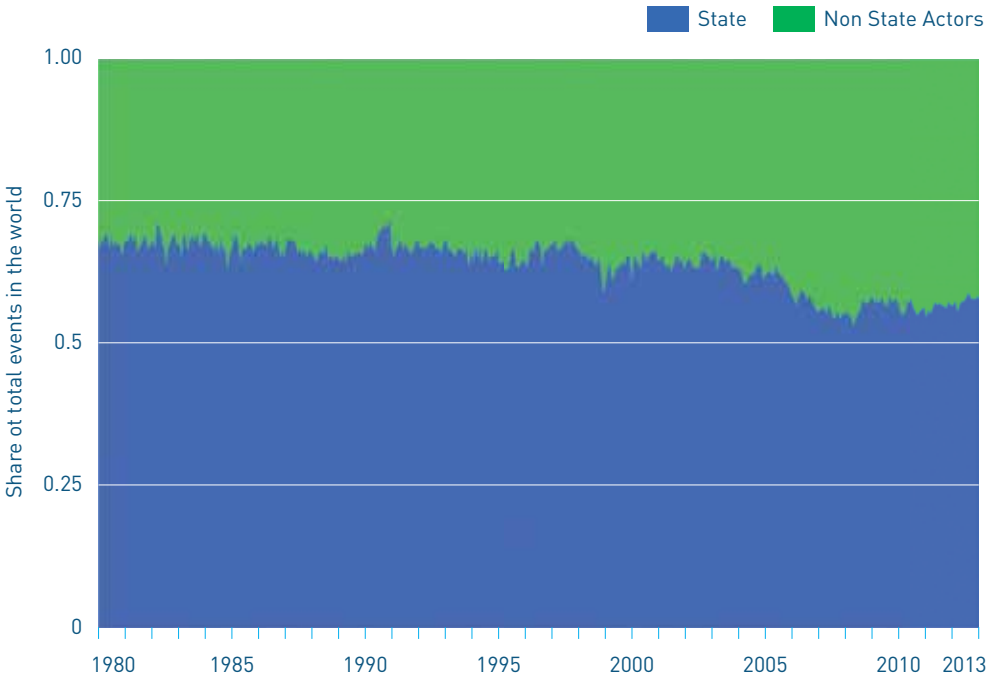


FIGURE 4.2: BALANCE BETWEEN STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM OVER TIME, NORMALIZED (SOURCE: GDELT)

Beyond the Zero-Sum Dichotomy

One of our main arguments is that the balance of influence on security issues between State and Non-State Actors does not have to be zero-sum. In other words, an increasing role of the one does not necessarily correspond to reduced influence of the other. In aligning their efforts, State and Non-State Actors may strengthen their respective influence on peace and order. NGOs can be positively involved in rule-setting, decision-making, monitoring or regulatory roles, or consultation procedures. A particular kind of engagement is public-private partnerships (PPPs).[44] They can be created for many reasons, for instance to draw on experience and expertise, or for reasons of efficiency. In addition, PPPs can help bring legitimacy to projects through inclusiveness that helps to foster trust.

In some instances, even the relationship between states and aggressive Non-State Actors cannot be regarded as zero-sum. There are examples of states and aggressive Non-State Actors benefiting from close cooperation. Terrorist groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Al Qaida in pre-9/11 Afghanistan might not have flourished without the help of Iran and Syria, and the Taliban regime, respectively. Similarly, relations between cooperative and aggressive Non-State Actors need not be zero-sum. Hezbollah and Hamas engage in charitable or social welfare activities to broaden and consolidate their base in their respective countries. According to one study, Hamas expends no less than 95% of its total budget on welfare activities.[45] Private (or state supported) charities as such can also play a role in financing criminal or terrorist activities, examples being Saudi Arabia's al-Haramein Foundation (now banned), the Holy Land Foundation (US) and Muslim Aid (UK). Many though not all of such charities have an Islamic background, inviting suspicion from law enforcement and military agencies that deal with aggressive Non-State Actor activity.

For states, a general concern is that Non-State Actors replace government functions without the state's consent; place themselves outside the law; or take the law into their own hands. This is both an issue in developed and in developing countries. For example, in recent years there was a debate in the Netherlands on whether Dutch merchant vessels could employ private security personnel to provide for their safety when crossing the waters of the Arabian Sea. The Dutch government maintained that Dutch ships were an extension of Dutch national territory and that therefore the Dutch state was the sole power allowed to bear arms and use violence on board those ships. Consequently, the Royal Netherlands Navy deployed so-called Vessel Protection Detachments (VPDs),[46] made up of heavily-armed marines, on merchant vessels. However, since there are limits to the number of ships the Navy can protect, and

since the ship owners had to pay for the VPDs anyway, private security contractors have increasingly become employed by Dutch ships in spite of this being a clear violation of Dutch law. As a result of this situation, the rules covering the protection of merchant shipping are currently being reviewed.

Such careful deliberation is not always the norm. In a number of developing countries, both military and non-military Non-State Actors have been chipping away at state power to the point where the very legitimacy of the authorities is questioned. This may result from the fact that the state itself lacks legitimacy with the people(s) living within its jurisdiction. In the era of decolonization, many states framed their legitimacy in a formalist way, emphasizing aspects such as self-determination and territorial integrity. However, tribal, ethnic, and religious loyalties have persisted, and with an increased ability to mobilize such sentiments through ICT networks, traditional groups are now seriously challenging state authorities in many countries. How such conflicting loyalties can tear states apart at the seams has been amply demonstrated in places such as Yugoslavia, Rwanda, DRC, Somalia, Cote d'Ivoire, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Mali, CAR and Ukraine.

To conclude, Non-State Actors have had a profound influence on the international order. They have helped push network diplomacy, as well as the notion that states are to be judged by their reputation, legitimacy and accountability, rather than just their military and economic capacities. Crucially, the key to maintaining power and influence will then not depend on these hard assets, but on how and where authorities position themselves in domestic and international networks, and how they mobilize their 'soft power' assets so as to ensure the integrity of domestic societies. Finally, these developments also warrant a reappraisal of relations between State and Non-State Actors, moving beyond a simple zero-sum dichotomy to a more nuanced perspective.

4.4 Examining Civil Society Actors in Depth

Defining Non-Governmental Organizations

Given the purpose of our analysis, an examination of Non-State Actors should focus on Non-State Actors that potentially affect Dutch security interests. From the vast array of Non-State Actors categories that are active these days, we have picked civil society organizations or NGOs to look at in more detail. These are particularly relevant because they could support or leverage the security functions of the state to a mutual benefit.

As a distinct community of actors, NGOs really burst into the international arena in the 1990s, when their arrival was seen as amounting to a "global associational

revolution."[47] Their influence on global public policy developed through successful advocacy campaigns around issues such as the banning of land mines, the fight against poverty, and environmental protection.[48] And while in retrospect the 1990s appear to have been the heyday of NGO activism, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in fact declared that "the 21st century will be the era of NGOs."[49]

However, while many NGOs are very visible, it has proved surprisingly hard to define what they really are. The term NGO as such originated in the UN Charter.[50] The World Bank crafted an authoritative definition calling them "organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations."[51] Dutch political scientist Paul Dekker stated that civil society is the domain in which *voluntary associations* are dominant.[52] Belonging to this group are local community associations, non-profit groups and service organizations. Dekker sees civil society as "the institutional domain of voluntary associations".[53] Based on Dekker's analysis we see NGOs as voluntary associations, with a non-profit objective and without institutional links to state authorities.

In spite of the fact that it is not easy to assess the impact of NGOs on states and governance because of the complexity of their mutual relations[54], many statistics bear out the rapid proliferation of NGOs over the past decades and the extent to which they have become the backbone of civil society at all levels. Between 1994 and 2009, for instance, the number of NGOs registered with the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), increased from 41 to 3,172. Altogether, there are now well over 50,000 internationally active NGOs.[55] At the domestic level, the numbers are even more staggering. In a 1999 report, *The Economist* wrote that "the United States alone has about 2 million NGOs, 70% of which are less than 30 years old. India has about 1 million grass-roots groups, while another estimate suggests that more than 100,000 sprang up in Eastern Europe between 1988 and 1995."[56]

In terms of NGOs' contributions to employment, one observer concluded that "NGOs are a thriving part of Western market economies, making up 14.4 percent of the workforce in the Netherlands, 11.1 percent in Canada, 9.8 percent in the United States, 6.3 percent in Australia, and 5.9 percent in Germany."[57] What is more, NGOs have also become very important international players, in particular in the development, human rights and humanitarian arenas. The same *Economist* report mentioned above also noted that "[a]s a group, NGOs now deliver more aid than the whole United Nations system."[58]

Explaining the Rise of NGOs

What accounts for the rise of NGOs? The same factors that explain the rise of Non-State Actors as a whole apply here as well. But other factors can be adduced. One is that the rise of NGOs is related to the coming-of-age of the baby-boom generation and their sense for social engagement.[59] Hence, the normative, or rights-based angle, is important here, as advocacy NGOs in particular have become primordial norm-setters at the global level.[60] Another important, and perhaps more obvious, reason is that NGOs can fill a needs gap which the state is unable to fill. Thus, the kind of issues that (international) NGOs can deal with are often too technically complex and extensive for governments to handle. One interesting area is in conflict resolution, or mediation. Once the preserve of states, NGOs are increasingly active in this field. Some of their advantages include that "[t]hey lack the political baggage that diplomats carry, (…); [t]hey are not bogged down by official caution and bureaucracy, [and a]bove all, they can take bigger risks over whom they will talk to and in what circumstances."[61]Accordingly, private mediators have been involved in conflicts in for instance Aceh, Sri Lanka and Colombia.

Other often-mentioned advantages of NGOs include their flexible way of operating; their ability to access the people concerned; and their cost-effectiveness. Given these comparative advantages, Kofi Annan concluded in his memoir *Interventions* that "NGOs were ahead of the UN in what they could deliver."[62] Finally, NGO networks also constitute a key asset: "International NGOs with a large international network may in some cases be better placed than governments to influence important international processes (e.g. to influence the agenda of the G20, by consulting with crucial government negotiators in advance)."[63]

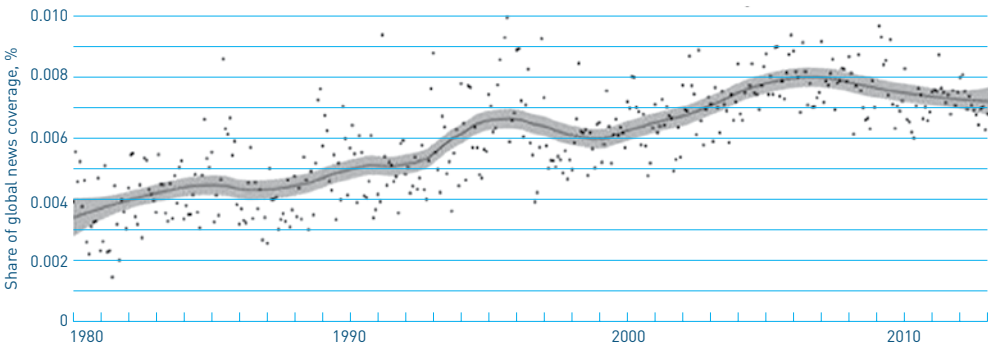


FIGURE 4.3: RISE OF INGOS SINCE 1980 (SOURCE: GDELT)

Hence, NGOs have several *raisons d'être*. But for such organizations to persist, they require a measure of legitimacy, both in the eyes of the government and the citizens they wish to serve. In absence of a formal democratic mandate, some NGOs may claim to give a voice to constituencies that do not see themselves represented in formal representative settings. Sometimes, they may even claim to be more legitimate than the government, in particular if the latter's democratic credentials are questionable. However, it is not always clear whether NGOs truly speak on behalf of existing constituencies, and whether or not they are in fact speaking on behalf of corporate interests for instance. As a result, "government rationales for inviting NGOs to the table vary just as much as NGOs' reasons to sit down at it, [although] one shared interest is to gain legitimacy by representing interested and affected publics."[64]

NGOs are mostly well aware of these legitimacy shortcomings, and they therefore seek to justify their existence through their professional credentials, the argument being "that NGOs contribute invaluable expertise in policy arenas where governments or business lack resources or specific 'on the ground' knowledge (...), claiming that without their specialized knowledge entering decision-making processes, political choices in democratic polities would be seriously limited."[65] However, the problem with this kind of legitimacy is that NGOs become too technocratic, and lose touch with their base and the communities where they operate. The inability to translate technical expertise to the grassroots level can lead to situations whereby "[a]pplying business methods to social problems, [NGOs] exaggerate what technology can do, ignore the complexities of social and institutional constraints (...) and wreak havoc with the existing fabric of society in places they know very little about."[66]

Some NGOs do not wish to associate with states for fear of losing their freedom of maneuver and their access to people in areas where guerrillas or terrorists are active. Yet, this does not mean that they are completely unambiguous about neutrality. For instance, Greenpeace and Sea Shepherd take to the seas with ships under a Dutch flag, and appeal for help to the Dutch government if things go wrong.[67] Others rely on state operated military air transport to get their relief goods to a disaster stricken country.[68] In return, states might consider demanding from NGOs some form of reciprocity when they are about to embark on stability operations.

Above all, legitimacy is a matter of trust. This is where we have witnessed some interesting trends in recent years. The first is a growing role for developing-nations ('southern') NGOs, which are now receiving more donor funding and whose role is sometimes seen as complementary because they bring legitimacy to the development

endeavors of civil society actors in local settings. The idea here is that the 'northern' NGOs can bring the needed capacity (and sometimes the funding too).[69]

The Role of Faith-Based NGOs

Within the context of the general upward trend in the number of NGOs, there is a "dramatic increase" of faith-based NGOs.[70] For instance, "[i]n Sub-Saharan Africa, (...) the World Bank estimates that as much as 50% of all health and education services are provided by Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs)."[71] This trend is surprising given that the drivers of NGO activity have largely been 'secular' factors such as technology, the rights revolution and globalization. However, the technocratic approach of many secular NGOs gives faith-based NGOs an advantage when entering the arena. This is because faith-based NGOs – which often operate at the grassroots level – are usually seen as more representative, legitimate, and more in tune with and understanding of people's beliefs.[72] In that sense, their engagement helps to create and sustain social capital as the glue that holds communities together.[73] Governments have picked up on this quality of FBOs, and are now "extending new forms of participatory governance to include faith communities, engaging them strategically in the development of more legitimate and effective decision- and policy-making."[74]

The story about FBOs is particularly interesting from the point of view of the worldwide fight against terrorism, from which two different but complementary pictures emerge. On the one hand, in the United States, almost 20% of foreign aid is now going to faith-based groups, against 10% before 9/11 took place. Part of the reason why much more money has gone to NGOs as a whole is because of the fact that, over the course of the war on terror, more development issues where NGOs have built up a strong track record have become 'securitized' and therefore become more of a priority for governments.[75] US-based FBOs, mostly if not all of Christian denomination, have particularly benefited from this development.

On the other hand, there is the rise of Islamic faith-based organizations. As a UN news agency noted, "With many Western donors cutting budgets amid fears of another recession, [the Middle East] has gained influence in aid, especially in countries with large Muslim populations. Both in terms of funds and action on the ground, the effort in [for instance] Somalia has put Muslim and Arab donors and organizations onto center stage."[76] Other factors that account for their rise is the increase in NGOs worldwide in general since the 1970s, but also the surge in pan-Arabism after the 1967 war with Israel.[77] Some Islamic charities, such as UK-based *Islamic Relief,* Saudi-based *International Islamic Relief Organization* and other such charities from Turkey, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates now have budgets exceeding 30 million

US$,[78] while the potential for Islamic philanthropy worldwide through *waqf* and *zakat* runs into the hundreds of billions of US$.[79]

However, these charities face some serious issues. Some have been put on international sanctions lists in connection with terrorist financing due to alleged links to al-Qaeda.[80] This situation, and the fact that there exists much mutual mistrust between Islamic charities and the rest of the development community, has made relations between these actors often frosty and complicated. For instance, while Islamic organizations tend not to engage in proselytizing – if only because they operate almost exclusively in Muslim countries – Christian NGOs operating in Muslim countries are suspected of doing so, in particular Evangelical NGOs.[81] What is more, Islamic NGOs tend to get a lot of financial support from their respective governments (in that respect following global trends).

Towards a New Equilibrium Between the State, IGOs and NGOs

Since the 1970s, the share of government funding for humanitarian NGOs has been rising steadily from a mere 2% to over 40% in the mid-1990s, with some NGOs receiving over 90% of their funding from government sources. This trend, says one observer, "raises questions about the extent to which NGOs are really *non*-governmental."[82] The result is that nowadays, "[m]ore government aid funding is flowing bilaterally through NGOs, or more precisely through the handful of largest NGOs, than ever before. (...) This trend towards more bilateral grant-making coincided with a doubling of official humanitarian assistance (...) resulting in closer relations between donors and NGOs."[83] The same issue of donor-dependence exists at the international level. Here, large amounts of aid were initially provided by (Western) governments, the result being that "funding can become a form of co-optation, and many NGOs now worry about how to prevent the funders dictating their mission so as to preserve their legitimacy."[84]

Since a perceived lack of legitimacy had always been a key issue with intergovernmental organizations, it is mildly ironic that today NGOs might come to suffer the same fate, being seen as agents made up of "faceless bureaucrats." In the 1990s it was said that "the real losers in this power shift [from states towards civil society] are international organizations."[85] Today, however, when it comes to providing global public goods, "well-run multilateral international institutions can deal with [this] more systematically and openly [than many private initiatives]."[86] Trends in terms of influence exercised by IGOs over the past decades show that they enjoyed their heydays in the era of the "Washington consensus", when the IMF, World Bank and the WTO were dominant players, but that their power declined relatively after 2000.

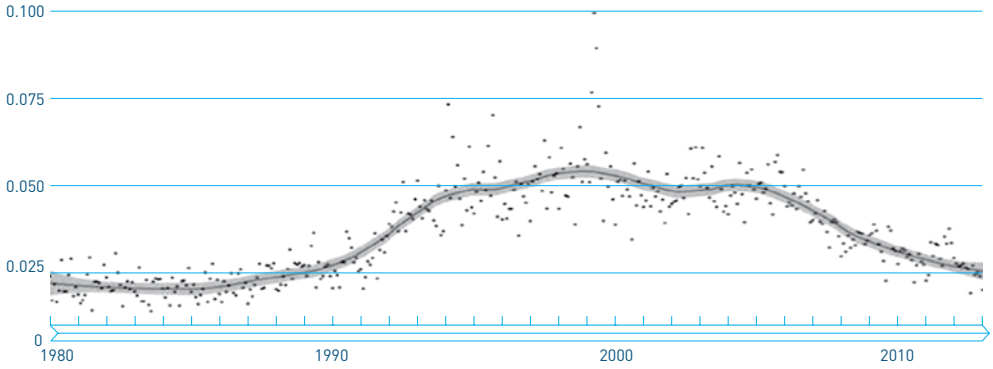


FIGURE 4.4: RISE AND FALL OF MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS, MEASURED BY SHARE OF GLOBAL NEWS COVERAGE (%), SINCE 1980 (SOURCE: GDELT).

Now, however, multilateral organizations might come to enjoy a new upsurge, partly driven in fact by NGO activism. The reason for this is that "[i]n terms of common goals, NGOs, leading states, and IGOs often broadly share the same general goal of promoting new forms of transnational governance to solve global problems. This common goal has led them to frequently work with one another to create and maintain international institutions and interventionist foreign policies meant to aid nations suffering from a wide variety of social, economic, and political problems."[87] Hence, we may be moving towards a new equilibrium whereby both NGOs and IGOs can draw on their respective strengths, that is, combining the former's ability to operate at the grassroots level, and the latter's capacities to coordinate support.

Thus, it becomes clear that NGOs are a typical offspring of their era, and in many respects in tune with contemporary political, social and economic developments. However, some important questions remain: one concerns the paradox between the need to be transparent and accountable on the one hand, and on the other, to avoid becoming too much driven by performance targets on the basis of log frames or other management tools, which make NGOs risk losing touch with their constituents on the ground. Another issue of concern is on whose behalf NGOs speak or act. What is the basis for their legitimacy? It appears that in this respect, faith-based NGOs are gaining ground vis-á-vis secular NGOs, thus bucking a global trend among NGOs that are driven by secular objectives (human rights for instance) and riding a secular wave of democratization and globalization.

These questions also have ramifications for how NGOs impact on the security environment, whether at the local or the international levels. To begin with, working with NGOs that are seen as legitimate is not just important for the sake of perceptions, but also because such NGOs are more likely to convey critical and more accurate information. In turn, this helps governments to better engage with governments and societies abroad, in particular where zones of conflict are concerned, or to better deal with transnational criminals trafficking illegal goods, humans and money through *places of flows* (nodal or intersection points) in transportation and communications networks. What is more, legitimate NGOs are key companions in any endeavor that seeks to reach people's hearts and minds, and to build trust so as to improve mutual relations. However, given the fluidity in how the NGO scene evolves sometimes, it is important to make sure to pick the right partners at the right time, and to know how to engage them. Concretely speaking, this could mean for instance trying to work more with faith-based NGOs – including those with an Islamic orientation – where possible, and not to impose onerous accountability burdens upon NGOs in general.

4.5 Conclusions & Security Implications

The role and influence of State versus Non-State Actors in the international system is not a zero-sum game. The scenario framework as used in the 2010 *Verkenningen* does not adequately represent this notion. Although we have seen that in recent years the activities of State Actors have increased as compared to those of Non-State Actors, this does not mean that the role of Non-State Actors has diminished. On the contrary, the influence of civil society Non-State Actors is still growing and holds consequences for how State and Non-State Actors interact in the international system.

The impact of Non-State Actors on the international environment has some key implications for Dutch security policy. At the most general level, Non-State Actors are drivers in shaping not just a multipolar, but a networked world order. This was acknowledged in the Docters van Leeuwen report. Secondly, influence in the international arena is no longer measured by military and economic power only, but also by the legitimacy and reputation of actors – as applied to both states and Non-State Actors. As a result, soft power will become more important for a state to ensure social stability, or to attract a wider range of people and companies to contribute to its economy. Thirdly, the evolution towards a networked world order is accompanied by legalization and judicialization, meaning that accountability for the implementation of decisions is shifted into the hands of impartial third parties (principally courts). Simultaneously, international law as 'hard law' will become relatively less important compared to 'soft law instruments', which are more suitable for Non-State Actors.

Fourthly, NGOs – among them increasingly faith-based organizations – are proving to be key drivers in promoting normative change. Finally, states will experience that their monopoly on the use of force to provide security is being challenged. This could be because of cutbacks in defense budgets, because of increasing supranational pooling or because of the wider and cheaper availability of private security capabilities.

Concretely speaking, in a world of network diplomacy, the distinction between 'state' and 'non-state' becomes increasingly blurred. Making common cause will become easier, resulting in a gain for both state and Non-State Actors. The functioning of state authorities will also evolve, and they become more administrators and regulators, rather than an implementer of policy. In the same vein, diplomats will come to function more as liaison officers and coordinators, from which their influence will flow. In turn, this will enable them to better mobilize and take advantage of what Non-State Actors have to offer, whether it concerns NGOs, charities, faith-based organizations or other network-like organizations.

These developments have several implications for how civil society organizations (or NGOs) operate. One is that they become more important as direct recipients of donor support, rather than that such support is channeled through multilateral agencies. At the same time, 'southern' NGOs are becoming relatively more important vis-à-vis 'northern' NGOs, also as a result of receiving increasingly more direct support. Another trend is that among donors themselves, Non-State Actors are becoming more important. NGOs are also becoming more important where peace-making is concerned–another area where the prerogative of states is challenged. Because of their growing dominance in (international) civil society and their interaction with many groups – including aggressive Non-State Actors – that are active in global networks, NGOs have access to information that is hard to come by for governments or international organizations. On top of that, they can also promote values and mobilize public opinion to impact the public policy agenda in a given country.

Security Implications

The security implications stemming from the above analysis all have to do with the way states can continue to exercise their core task of providing security to their citizens. They run the risk of losing relevance because today's complex environment makes it more and more difficult to exercise security functions in a stand-alone fashion. Hence, rather than simply maintaining the monopoly on the use of force, states will become more like administrators of power – whether physical or otherwise.[88] The result would be, in the words of Anne-Marie Slaughter, that

"government becomes governance precisely because of the absence of any centralized authority to exercise command and control power."[89] One consequence is that the state will come to operate in a 'disaggregated' fashion – that is, different parts of a government administration will be active in different kinds of networks, many of which are cross-border. "As a consequence [of these developments]", the Dutch WRR concluded, "the traditional distinction between 'domestic' and 'foreign' is becoming increasingly blurred."[90]

The most concrete consequence of this development is that states, like Non-State Actors, need to be able to operate in a global network environment.[91] The Dutch Foreign Minister wrote in this regard recently that "[o]ur diplomats need to be at home in a hybrid world of states and other kinds of players, in which the classic interstate relations and modern societal and business networks intersect. This requires substantive expertise and excellent network management skills, which will give the Netherlands an opportunity to punch above its weight."[92] Indeed, this echoes the finding of the WRR, which wrote that "[t]raditionally, a state's power used to be determined by its GDP, army, and/or population size, and this is often still the case in state-dominated arenas. Meanwhile, however, such indicators have ceased to be crucial ones. In non-state arenas and in networks, centrality and a position as a broker or node in the network are at least as important, and this is precisely where the Netherlands should be able to excel."[93] The *Docters Van Leeuwen* commission also underlined this view.[94]

When it comes to identifying the right kinds of partners in the various networks, the United States government suggests a *community diplomacy approach*. This entails "identifying and developing networks of contacts through specific on-the-ground projects, programs, or events and then helping those networks evolve into consistent centers of action on areas of common interest – from non-proliferation to climate change to expanding opportunities for women and girls"[95] The WRR said in this regard that: "[d]ealing with NGOs and transnational corporations (multinational and international companies) requires another approach than a state-based focus. In its joint activities with Non-State Actors, the Dutch government does not play the role of gatekeeper but rather that of liaison. A liaison not only establishes connections but also selects what connections are interesting and which of them may help promote strategic choices. The aim here is, while keeping an eye on domestic self-interest across territorial and immaterial borders, to help connect actors and networks and to exchange goods and ideas in a way that will benefit the Netherlands and the Dutch." [96]

In addition, and to concretize this approach, a more systematic and structural cooperation with Non-State Actors is called for.[97] Indeed, this would help to consolidate networks that serve the purpose of exchanging information among partners, which is of great value to counter security threats for instance. The Dutch Foreign Minister wrote on this point that "[i]n order to secure a strong position on gathering information and to be able to operate effectively, we need a wide network of contacts. [For instance,] to counter crime, drug problems, terrorism and new (cyber) threats so as to protect domestic security imperatives, specialized Dutch liaison officers representing the police, the intelligence service and the Ministry of Justice are stationed in countries from which threats emanate or where information is collected."[98] This requires a flexible approach whereby diplomats and liaison officers can quickly be relocated depending on need, and constant monitoring of new actors emerging in civil society or in the realms of criminal or terrorist groups. This emphasizes once again the need to monitor and control the nodal points where the various networks intersect, enabling policy officers more flexibility to consider threats and opportunities that are being faced, and the actors that drives these.

5 BALANCING ON THE BRINK: VULNERABILITY OF STATES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

5 BALANCING ON THE BRINK: VULNERABILITY OF STATES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Maarten Gehem, Philipp Marten, Matthijs Maas, and Menno Schellekens

5.1 Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, the number and intensity of inter- and intrastate conflict has dropped dramatically.[1] However, this downward trend is somewhat reversed in recent years; not in the least due to an increase in conflicts on the fringes of Europe – the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in particular.[2] Political upheavals have spurred hopes for a better future in many countries, but this is far from guaranteed. And in the short-term, conflict has increased and destabilized the region. This is especially concerning for European states, because destabilization and conflict may affect our own security and prosperity. Refugees are fleeing civil-war-torn Libya and arriving at the coast of Lampedusa, the Arab Spring sparked energy security concerns across the globe, and European jihadists are now fighting in Syria. Such security contingencies become increasingly important in light of the American rebalance towards Asia, which may well mean Europe will have to step up its role in the region.[3]

The current turmoil offers opportunities as well as threats.[4] We now hail the French Revolution as a definite moment in the struggle for freedom. But it took many decades, and some gruesome regimes with less than solid human right records, before stability returned and democracy took root. Similarly, regime changes in the MENA region are unlikely to lead to stable democracies anytime soon. But in the long run, conflicts may lead to more stable, prosperous and free societies, which may offer economic opportunities for European nations as well. And this, too, is particularly relevant for European states, since regional stability may very well be influenced by how they wield their political, economic and military instruments.

In this paper, we will zoom in on the vulnerability of the countries in the MENA region to specific types of conflict and assess the security implications for Europe.

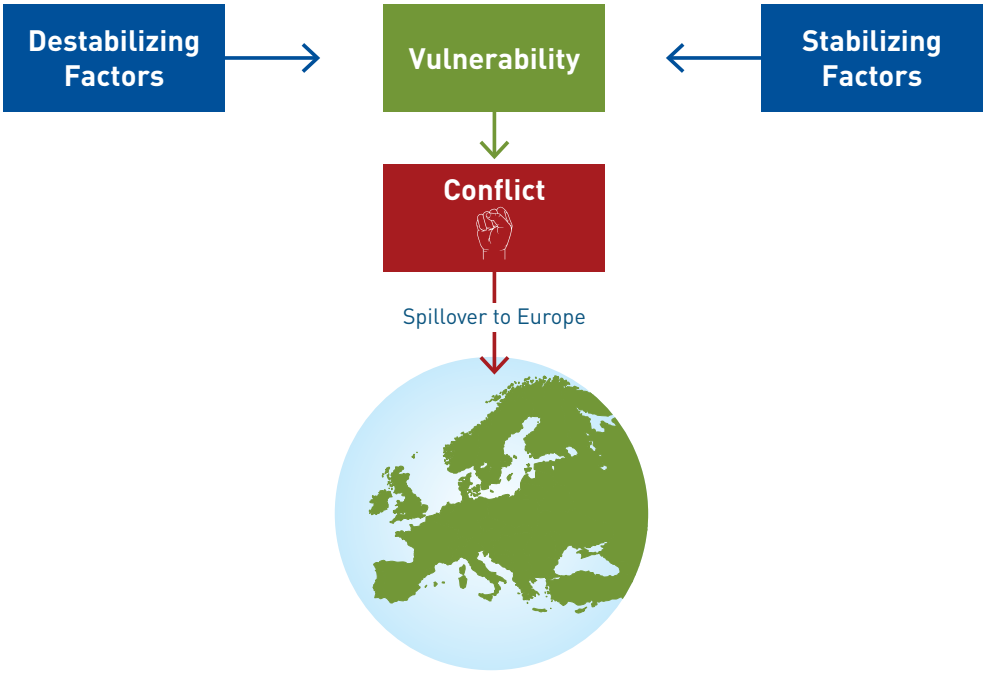


FIGURE 5.1: VULNERABILITY FRAMEWORK.

Vulnerability is defined as the extent to which a country is unable to absorb and manage current and future risk factors and take advantage of external stabilization (see Figure 5.1).[5] Unstable states are more prone to conflict, which may in turn spill over to Europe.

This paper is organized as follows. In section 5.2 it briefly analyzes the Arab Spring. In section 5.3 it provides an overview of the vulnerability for conflict of the MENA countries. The following section, 5.4, describes various country specific pathways to conflict. Section 5.5 gauges the possible security effects of these propensities for instability and conflict on Europe. And finally, section 5.6 concludes with the key security implications from our analysis.

5.2 The Arab Spring

In recent years the MENA region has become the scene of mass protest, toppled regimes, and civil wars. This is especially the case since the Arab Spring: the number of violent conflicts in the region has increased from 21 in 2010 to 48 in 2013 (see Figure 5.2).

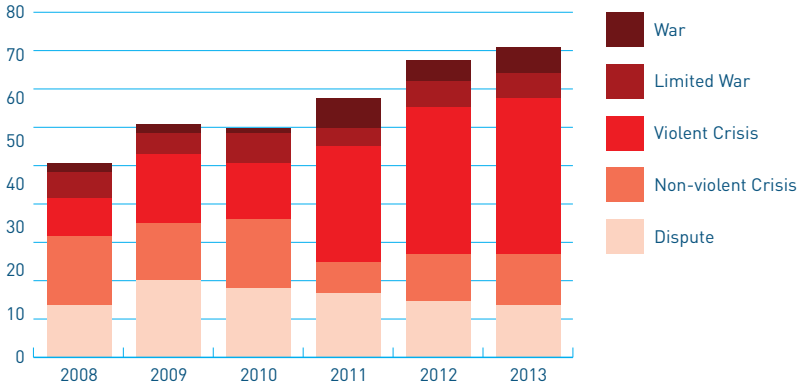


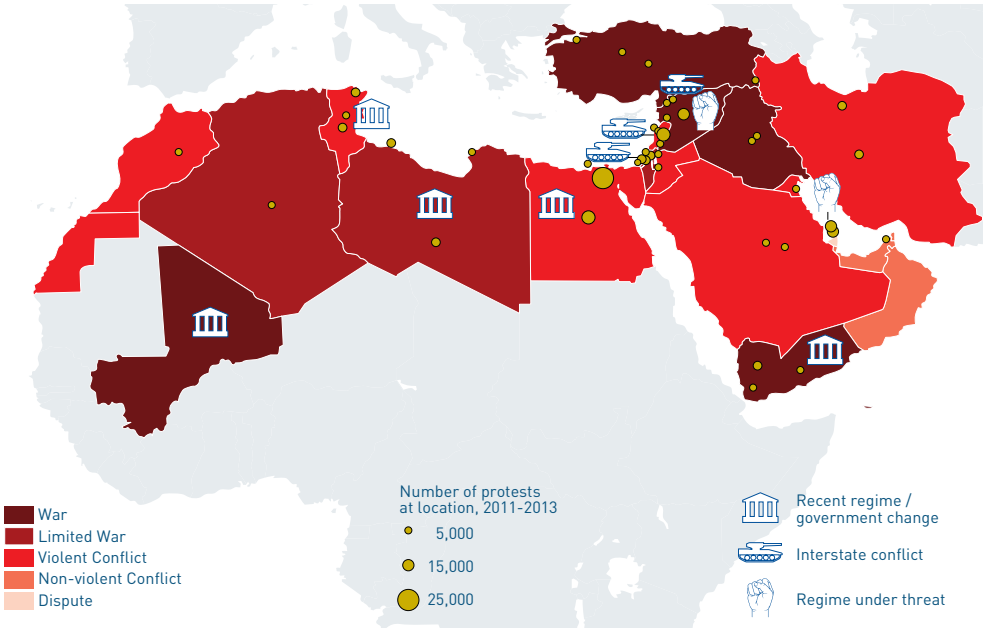
FIGURE 5.2: CONFLICT INTENSITY IN THE MENA REGION (SOURCE: HIIK CONFLICT BAROMETER 2008-2013).[6]

Before 2011, the dominant view was that security in the MENA region was best guarded by autocrats. Arab regimes were seen as the exception to democratization theories explaining regime change, because of the supposed incompatibility of Islam with democracy,[7] their institutional make-up,[8] the powerful role of security forces,[9] or oil rents.[10] And in international politics, many believed supporting autocratic regimes a necessity in order to maintain stability and secure interests, including stable energy supply, fighting terrorism, and safeguarding Israeli security.[11]

This frame shifted after the revolts (see the dots in Map 5.1) that spread after the self-immolation of the Tunisian fruit vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi. Talk of "Arab Exceptionalism" was replaced by the paradigm of the "Arab Spring", the hope that a wave of democratization would ripple throughout the region. Though it is too early to predict the long-term effects, these expectations turned out premature at best. Some have argued that after Spring, Arab states are skipping two seasons, and Winter is coming.[12] Whatever the prospect, as Henry Kissinger remarked, we are currently in "Scene One of Act One of a Five-Act drama".[13]

Though developments in Tunisia may provide ground for some optimism, the situation in post-Arab Spring states remains extremely uncertain. Egypt's military ousted president Morsi and announced a state of emergency. Libya is on the brink of becoming a failed state. Although president Saleh had to flee from office, he and his party still dominate politics in Yemen. A civil war erupted in Syria, which is escalating into neighboring countries (see Map 5.1). In Mali, only outside military intervention could push back an alliance of Tuareg rebels and al-Qaeda fighters with arms and ammunition picked up in civil war torn Libya. And Shi'a-led protests in Bahrain were

violently repressed with help from Saudi Arabia. In total, hundreds of thousands of people have died or fled their homes, billions of dollars in economic productivity has been lost, and the region is rife with the seeds of conflict.



MAP 5.1 CONFLICT IN THE MENA REGION (2011-2013), SHOWING COUNTRY INTENSITY, LOCATION AND INTENSITY OF PROTESTS, REGIME CHANGES, POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND INTERSTATE CONFLICTS. (SOURCE: HIIK CONFLICT BAROMETER 2013; GDELT).[14]

The causes of conflict vary.[15] High unemployment levels and youth bulges have played a role in fuelling most protests. And social and traditional media accelerated the spread of revolts throughout the region.[16] But there was not just one road that led to revolts.[17] Rising food prices spurred protests in Egypt, Syria, Libya and Yemen, but played a minor role in Tunisia and Bahrain. Whatever the causes, the drivers of the Arab Revolts are still brewing under the surface and could spark future conflict. In addition, other developments, such as a drop in oil prices, or changing ethnic and religious demographics, could lead to protests, revolts or even outright civil war. Below, we focus on these different roads that may lead to large-scale violence in coming years. We first present aggregated vulnerability scores based on factors correlated with conflict. Then we single out four different paths to conflict. Because the most severe violence takes place domestically, we focus on intrastate conflicts.

5.3 Birds-eye View of Regional Vulnerability

The MENA region contains some of the most fragile states in the world. The State Fragility Index (SFI) of the *Center for Systemic Peace* provides a quick overview of overall state vulnerability. Iraq, Mali, and Yemen appear most fragile (see Figure 5.3).[18] As in Algeria and Libya, governments in these countries are generally inept (or at least perceived as such) in running the economy, enforcing security, addressing social needs, and running a stable and open political system. These vulnerabilities render states much more prone to conflict, which is even further increased by recent or ongoing conflict.

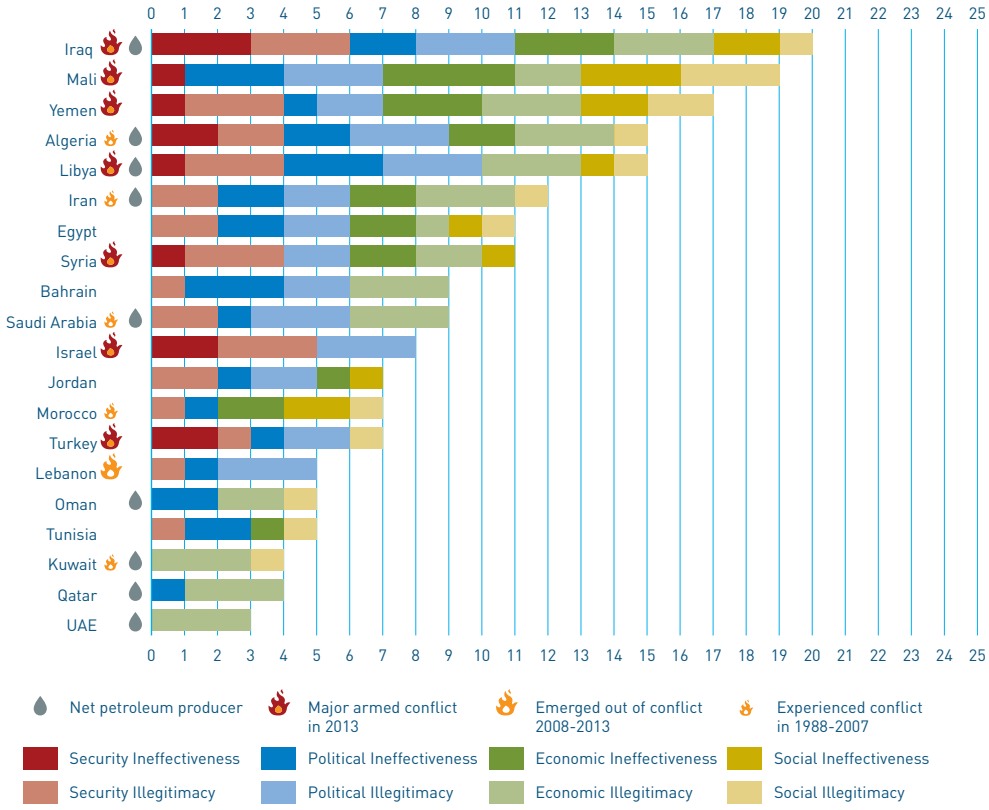


FIGURE 5.3: FRAGILITY OF MENA STATES (SOURCE: STATE FRAGILITY INDEX 2012).[19]

Other countries in the region, Iran, Egypt and Syria in particular, suffer from similar ailments – although to a lesser extent. The situation in Syria, especially, is compounded by the current civil war.[20] And Israel and Turkey suffer from long-standing violent

conflicts with the Palestinians and the Kurds respectively. Other states such as Saudi-Arabia and Bahrain are much more peaceful, but the SFI ranking points to the vulnerabilities simmering below the surface: despite a relatively high GDP per capita, these Gulf states preside over an ineffective and illegitimate political system, and have economies that are highly dependent on oil exports, which renders them vulnerable to oil price shocks.

Finally, there is a cluster of countries with low fragility: Lebanon, Oman, Tunisia, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). With the exception of Lebanon and Tunisia, these are some of the richest countries in the region with relatively good social conditions and little security concerns. As we will see in the sections below, Tunisia and Lebanon face rather extensive economic and security (and in the case of the latter: sectarian) concerns, which the SFI ranking does not account for.

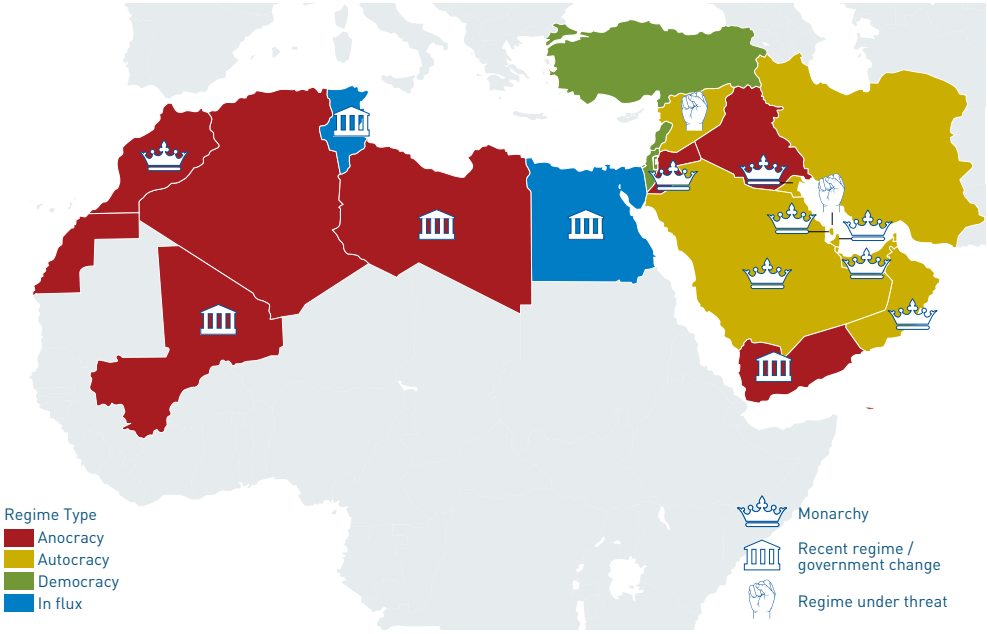
5.4 Paths to Conflict

It is one thing to say Mali is more vulnerable than Bahrain. But a sharp drop in oil prices may well spur conflict in the latter, while leaving Mali relatively untouched. Overall vulnerability scores like the SFI index can give an idea of which states are most vulnerable, but conflicts are the result of an interplay of drivers that flare up under specific circumstances. Such drivers of vulnerability (e.g. fuel-export dependency, ethnic tensions) are structural factors that tend to change only gradually. Thus by looking at different *types* of vulnerability to specific forms of conflicts, we not only get an idea of what causes conflict, but also some measure of predictability. And such an approach can point to leverage points for policies aimed at increasing stability. In the sections below we look at the vulnerability of MENA states through the lens of four types of vulnerability: political turmoil, poor economic and social conditions, fuel export dependency and ethnic and religious tensions.

Political Turmoil

Political turmoil increases the vulnerability of a state to large-scale conflict.[21] Such instability may manifest itself in conflicts before, during and after regime change. And to be sure: such political change may be preferable, such as when an autocracy is toppled, thus opening up prospects to more democratic, humane and prosperous societies. But even under the best of circumstances, regime change is rarely a one-way ticket to stability. More often than not, it opens up a quagmire of violence. The current intrastate conflicts that followed regime changes in MENA states are signposts of the difficult road ahead.

One indication of the increased vulnerability is that now, all North African states, and Iraq, Jordan and Yemen, have regimes in place that show signs of both a democracy *and* an autocracy (see Map 5.2). Evidence suggests that such mixed regimes, also called "anocracies", are relatively unstable: over the last 50 years, they were ten times more likely to experience intrastate conflict than democracies, and two times more than autocracies.[22]



MAP 5.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING FUTURE POLITICAL TURMOIL IN THE REGION. ANOCRACIES AND STATES THAT HAVE EXPERIENCED VIOLENT REGIME/GOVERNMENT CHANGE OR STATES THAT EXPERIENCE LARGE-SCALE REVOLTS ARE MOST VULNERABLE (SOURCE: POLITY IV PROJECT, 2011, 2012).[23]

Looking into more specific traits of regimes and political change, vulnerability is **highest** in countries where demands for political change turned violent, as in **Syria**, **Libya**, **Yemen**, **Iraq** and **Mali**. It is no coincidence that these states, with the exception of Mali, all have or had regimes where power was concentrated in the hands of one ruler.[24] Such "personalist regimes" generally tend to be inert to political change. The power base is narrow, with a limited number of people depending on the ruler, and opposition groups are often fragmented.[25] Gaddafi, for example, skillfully minimized opposition to his autocratic rule by playing the different tribes in Libya out against one another. But the Libyan civil war also shows that *when* regime-threatening developments occur, autocratic rulers rarely resist the temptation to crack them down violently.

Historically, the chances of successful democratization in personalist regimes like Libya are particularly slim. Over half of all autocratic breakdowns have ended in another autocratic regime, with personalist autocracies twice as likely to be succeeded by some form of autocratic regime than by a democracy.[26] Toppled personalist regimes often fall into a power vacuum lacking political institutions, effective law enforcement, political parties or professional news media. This increases the risk of conflict breaking out, which in turn jeopardizes democratization.[27] Because of the absence of such conflict mitigating institutions, formerly disenfranchised groups for example are more likely to radicalize demands (e.g. religious freedoms, self-government) that were hitherto suppressed. This is what happened in Iraq, which saw sectarian violence flare up when Saddam's Sunni Ba'ath party was ousted and formerly suppressed Shi'a groups came to power. Fledgling institutions were ill equipped to mitigate these demands peacefully, sparking a decade of sectarian struggle. Similarly, the end of the civil war in Libya left the country with a dysfunctional new government that proved unable to demilitarize militias and control large parts of the country – which consequently fell into the hands of tribal warlords and religious extremists. And after Yemeni president Saleh fled to neighboring Saudi Arabia, Yemen suffered numerous violent attacks by Southern separatist, the Northern Houthi tribe and Muslim extremists (see the section on Religious and Ethnic Tensions). The ongoing civil war makes Syria extremely inflammable. Even if the rebels win, the sharp differences in ideology and preferred state system between fighting factions make the emergence of a stable democracy uncertain.[28]

Regimes that suffered less from a personalist cult, like **Tunisia** and **Egypt**, had a more diverse power base and much higher chances of successful democratization.[29] This renders them **somewhat less vulnerable**. Leaders in these regimes shared power with a wider political party and military forces. And because the military in these states viewed itself as loyal to the state instead of the regime, it was able to drop support of the sitting autocrat, switch sides and support the rebels. Though the Mubarak regime had strong personalist traits, the powerful military could operate as a stand-alone and well-organized institution. This is one reason why, historically, military regimes are almost twice as likely to turn into democracies than any other autocratic regime.[30] And political change in such states also tends to be much more peaceful.[31]

Though the regime in **Bahrain** did not fall, it remains highly vulnerable to political turmoil. Deeply rooted regime threatening protest could only be curbed with the aid from Saudi Arabia (on which more below) and look unlikely to abate anytime soon. The fledgling political apparatus of the **Palestinian Territories** is furthermore suffering

from a myriad of ills – ineffectiveness, fragmented control and disputes over territory, political fragmentation and high levels of domestic conflict. All these factors make for an instable political situation, manifesting itself in high levels of insecurity.

Algeria, **Iran**, **Lebanon**, **Turkey, Morocco and Jordan** suffer from **low but still significant** vulnerability to conflict coming from political turmoil. Algeria has seen protests for more political rights in the face of "*le pouvouir*", the opaque political elite run by a strong military regime. The increasing foothold of Islamist terrorists and Islamist political parties (see also the section on Religious and Ethnic Tensions) and the ill health of president Bouteflika, who had a stroke in 2013 and has hardly appeared in public since, make the country susceptible to future violence. And though the largest protests in Iran were prior to the Arab Spring, with the 2009 Green Movement demonstrating against rigged elections that saw president Ahmadinejad stay in power, Iranians continued to go out into the streets in 2011 and 2012 (albeit in smaller numbers). Economic sanctions seem to have fuelled economic concerns (see also the sections on Social and Economic Issues and Fuel-export Dependent Countries). If sanctions were lifted in the wake of the P5+1 deal with Iran on its nuclear program, this would diminish one source of political turmoil in the country. Since May 2013, Turkey has seen increasingly violent (crack downs on) political protests against the Islamist inspired and increasingly autocratic rule of Prime Minister Erdogan.[32] This is compounded by increasing tension between Erdogan's AK party, the judiciary and the military, and crack downs on media freedoms. And the political landscape in Lebanon remains heavily fragmented and divided along sectarian lines, with some political parties liaised with militant and extremist organizations at home or abroad (see also Section Religious and Ethic Tensions).

Jordan and Morocco are a case in point. Of all autocratic regimes in the region, the monarchies appear the least vulnerable. And although Bahrain experienced large-scale revolts, it is remarkable that the Arab Spring did not topple a single king. This has led some to suggest that these regimes are inherently more stable due to historical high levels of legitimacy, or institutional superiority.[33] But the stability of these regimes rather results from their strategic advantages. Over the years, monarchies have constructed "authoritarian bargains" with their people: by sharing oil and gas profits, they bought popular support. Fuel rents and foreign aid increased the budgets in most monarchies, leaving them with large state funds to buy-off popular dissent and maintain large armies and security forces. For example, Saudi Arabia in 2011 announced a social welfare package of over US$ 130 billion, including public sector job creation, pay rises, and house construction.[34] Similar efforts were taken by Oman and

Bahrain, which led to expanded entitlement programs, new public sector jobs and greater subsidies. Many MENA monarchies further profited from high support levels of foreign forces such as the US and France, but also from Saudi Arabia itself, which has offered military and/or economic aid to Jordan, Bahrain, the UAE, and Oman.[35]

So long as oil prices remain high, Gulf monarchies will be able to maintain their social contract and have the means to diffuse protest (more on this in the section on Fuel-export Dependent Countries). The situation is different in the monarchies of **Jordan** and **Morocco**. The financial leeway of these regimes is smaller, which partly explains why Morocco and Jordan have responded to protests by small-scale political reforms. It also matters that these monarchies are more personalist than their dynastic counterparts in the Gulf.[36] In the latter, the whole royal family shares in the wealth and power of the state, which makes it more likely that any diminishing of power or wealth will meet with resistance. In Bahrain for example, hardline relatives barred King Hamad from meeting protestors' demands to appoint a new cabinet. The room to maneuver makes Morocco and Jordan more susceptible to gradual, more peaceful regime change. Morocco's King Mohammed VI preemptively positioned himself as the leader of political and economic reform, installing a new constitution that increased the power of the parliament and the judiciary and improved women's and Berber's rights.[37] And in Jordan, King Abdullah II allocated US$ 500 million for increasing public wages and fuel subsidies and several amendments leading to incremental political liberalizations.[38]

The poor economic situation and specific ethnic and religious tensions in Jordan make it unlikely that these reforms will have resolved protestor concerns (more in the next section, and the section on Religious and Ethnic Tensions). At the same time, Saudi Arabia is keen on keeping the king in power and maintaining stability on its border, which may well lead the country to send economic and military aid to repress protests, as it did in Bahrain and other MENA states.

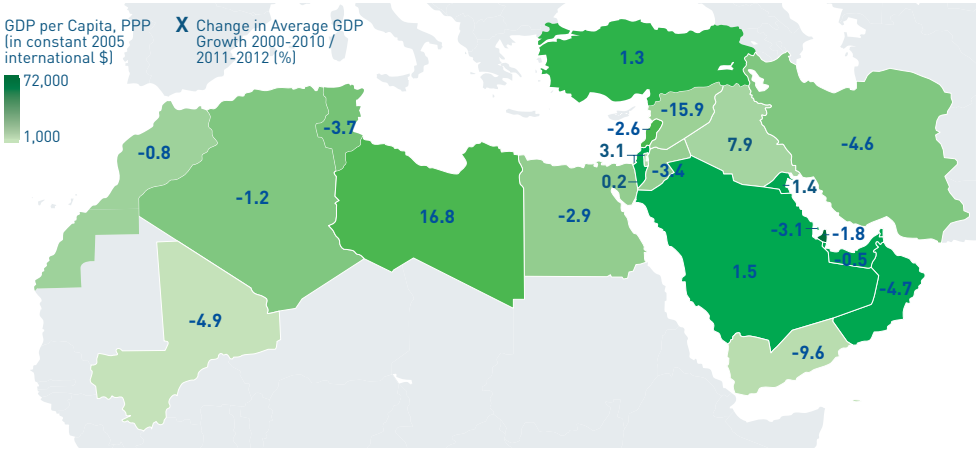
Social and Economic Issues

A second path to conflict follows from social and economic issues, making them vulnerable to protests and terrorist attacks. Such poor social and economic situations range from bad general economic performance, a large unemployed youth cohort, high vulnerability to spikes in food prices, and poor water access.

Economic Performance

Conflict and economic decline are mutually reinforcing. Increasing unemployment and poverty levels lower the opportunity costs for people to protest and rebel, since they literally have less to lose.[39] And governments suffering from poor growth have less cash to spend on subsidies or their security forces to reign in or prevent protests. In turn, a fluid political and security situation erodes business confidence, scares away tourists and Foreign Direct Investment, may damage infrastructure or spark protests and labor strikes like the ones in Egypt and Tunisia in 2011, while increasing fiscal deficits.[40]

Many MENA states risk being caught in this poverty-conflict trap (see Map 5.3). **Mali**, **Yemen**, **Iraq**, **the Palestinian Territories**, **Morocco**, **Syria**, **Egypt** and **Jordan** in particular suffer from very low GDP per capita, rendering them most vulnerable to riots, strikes, and civil unrest fuelled by grudges over poor economic performance.[41] Particularly worrisome is that many of these states have seen their GDP plummet in the wake of the global economic crisis and the Arab Spring. The GDP syphoning effect of conflict becomes clear when comparing growth figures in post-Arab Spring states over 2011-2012 with the previous decade. In all these states, bar Libya (on which more below), economic growth declined.



MAP 5.3. ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE IN THE MENA REGION. GDP PER CAPITA FIGURE FOR 2012 (SOURCE: WORLD BANK, 2012). (NOTE: GDP PER CAPITA FIGURE FOR PALESTINE TERRITORIES IS IN US$, CURRENT PRICES).[42]

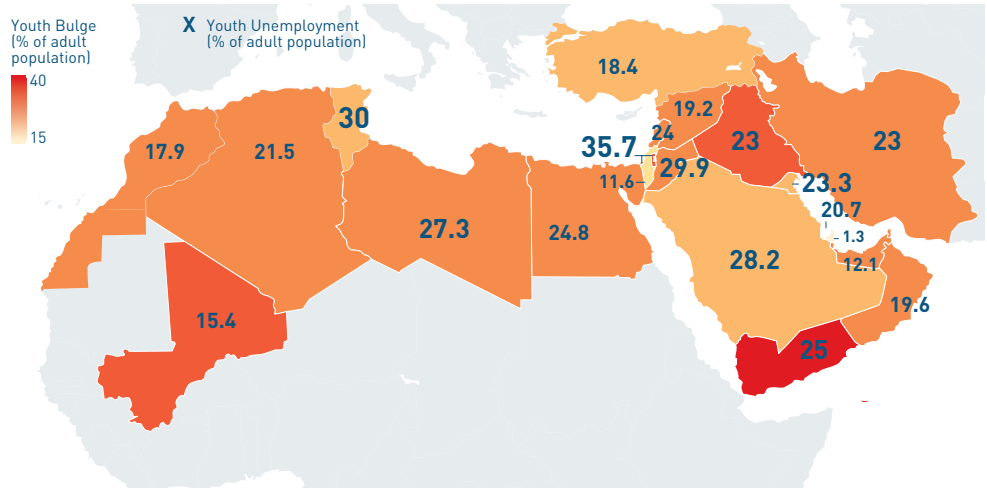
These regimes often face high expectations about what they can and should achieve economically. And because these expectations often prove difficult to meet, they may fuel resurgent revolts. In Egypt, for example, public discontent over the perceived economic mismanagement of the Morsi government was one of the causes of the military coup in July 2013.[43] And although the Libyan economy quickly rebounded when oil exports picked up after the civil war (reflected in high 2011-2012 GDP growth figures), at least three oil-exporting ports in the East have been under control of rebel groups since mid-2013, leading to a dramatic drop in oil exports that has already cost the government over $7 billion in lost revenue.[44] This is particularly problematic, since a large share of the Libyan government budget goes to payments of former rebel fighters, and is aimed at buying off potential discontent. And just as the 2011 conflict in Libya led to economic problems in neighboring Tunisia, the Syrian civil war bequeaths economic problems in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, most notably by streams of refugees, trade route disruptions and increasing food prices.[45] Furthermore, the economic recovery of many MENA states, Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt in particular, might be further stifled by weak external demand from their key European trading partners as a result of the Eurozone crisis.[46]

Conversely, Turkey, Israel and the Gulf monarchies all have a relatively high GDP per capita, high growth figures and little internal conflict, and thus are less susceptible to conflict caused by economic problems. Though, as we will discuss in the next sections, oil and gas export dependencies make Gulf monarchies susceptible to very particular form of economic vulnerability, these states have much better economic credentials and large financial reserves in place that can be used to ward off protests. The latter was illustrated by the ramping up of post-Arab Spring military aid and social and economic welfare programs of Saudi Arabia and Qatar – both in their own country and in the region.[47]

The Poor and the Young

Very large youth cohorts compound the poor economic situation in the MENA region, with 65% of the population in the region being under the age of 25.[48] While large youth bulges (measured as the share of people aged 15-24 over the adult population, defined as those aged 15 or above) can serve as a 'demographic dividend' to boost growing economies, a poor economic situation lowers the bar for youngsters to resort to political violence – from riots to terrorist attacks. [49] Young people tend to be the first in line to suffer the consequences of economic decline. And such disgruntled, unemployed youngsters offer a 'supply of cheap rebel labor', likely to take their frustrations and lack of prospects out on the streets.[50] Unemployment can be a

particular problem for youngsters in states with conservative social structures. Social isolation and exclusion in the form of cultural shame or the diminishing of marriage prospects may make single youngsters more likely to put their life in jeopardy.



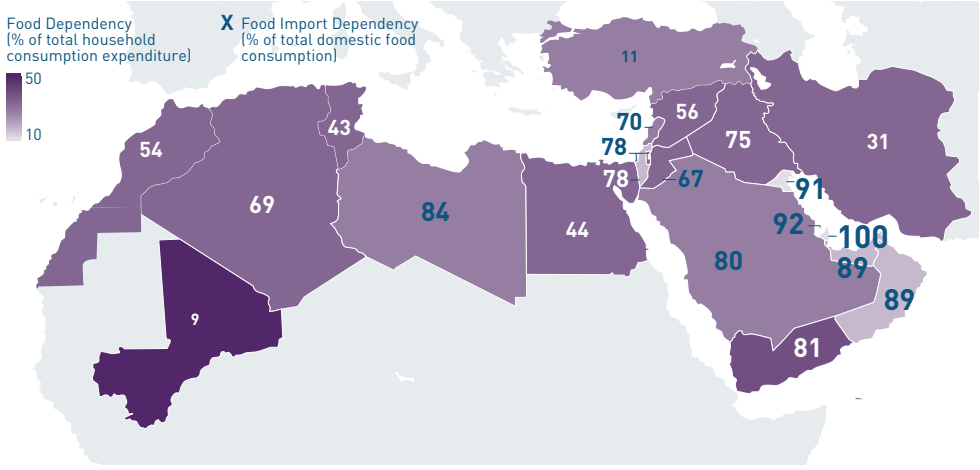
MAP 5.4. DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC FACTORS IMPACTING THE MENA REGION. YOUTH BULGE DATA FOR 2010 (SOURCE: UNPD). YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT DATA FOR 2012 (SOURCE: WORLD BANK).[51]

The combination of high youth unemployment with a large youth bulge is particularly pressing in **the Palestinian Territories**, **Yemen**, **Jordan**, and **Iraq** (see Map 5.4). Evidence suggests that countries with a youth bulge of over 35% (currently in Mali, Yemen and the Palestinian Territories) are more than one-and-a-half times more likely to experience conflict than countries with more median youth bulges of around 15% (in the MENA region only Qatar and Bahrain come close). And statistically, a one percent youth bulge increase is associated with over 4 percent increase in the chance of violent conflict breaking out.[52] Though youth bulges are set to decline in coming years almost invariably across the region, Mali, Yemen, Iraq, the Palestinian Territories and Syria will still have youth bulges of around 30% and higher in 2020. But in Algeria, Iran, Lebanon and especially the UAE and Oman, the sharp drop in youth cohorts is set to reduce conflict potential. Yet it should be noted that there is some evidence to suggest that it was the increase in the 'not-so-young bulge' (share of people aged 25-39 of the adult population) over past decades that has fuelled protests. So it is possible that in these countries, 'former youth bulges' increase vulnerability to conflict.[53]

In Gulf states like Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia, youth bulges and high youth unemployment is less of an issue. These countries have the financial means to buy-off potential discontent, and youth unemployment figures are especially high because expats make up from 50% (Saudi Arabia) to over 90% (UAE) of the labor force. Expelling these foreign workers would automatically lower these unemployment levels, although this would create economic problems of its own.

Food Dependency

One important cause of riots and other forms of political violence is outrage over rising food prices. Poor people with little left to lose are more likely to take their anger over governments failing to fulfill their most basic needs to the streets.[54] Vulnerability to food price fluctuations is widespread throughout the region, and is highly correlated with general economic performance. In **Mali** and **Yemen**, the two poorest states in the region, food dependency scores are highest, with 44 and 52% of all household income spent on food (see Map 5.5). Yemen is even more vulnerable because it imports over 80% of all food destined for domestic food consumption. When food prices on the global market increase, the poorest in Yemen will feel the burden. Other poorer states like **Syria**, **Egypt**, **Iraq**, the **Palestinian Territories**, **Tunisia**, and **Morocco** all have food dependency scores of over 35%. And because many of these states (particularly Iraq and the Palestinian Territories) are dry and ill suited for agriculture, most food has to be imported.[55]



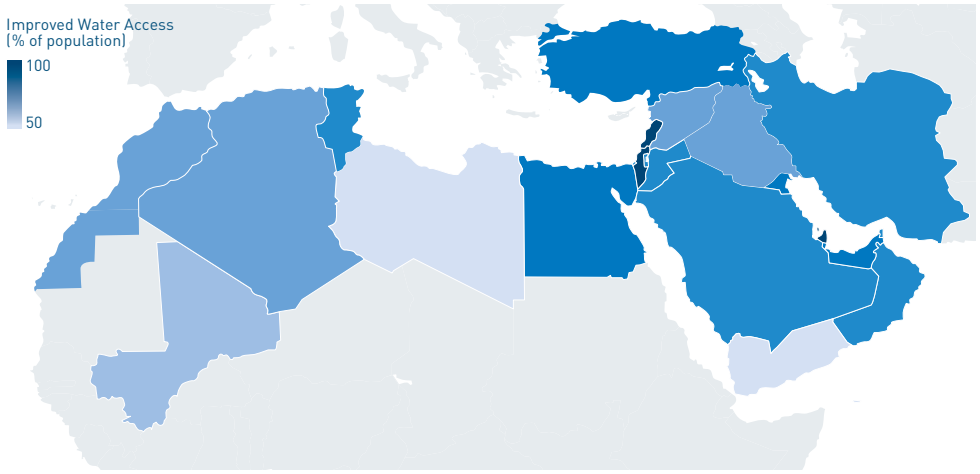
MAP 5.5. FOOD DEPENDENCY (2011) AND FOOD IMPORT DEPENDENCY (2012) IN THE MENA REGION. (SOURCES: FAO-STAT, ILO, USDA, ND-GAIN).[56]

To be sure: government policies, such as subsidies, matter. Protests frequently erupt where governments are no longer willing or able to provide enough subsidies to cushion price shocks.[57] In Egypt for example, people went out on the streets to protest government inaction in the face of a 30% food price rise over 2010.[58] In contrast, although Moroccans spend an average of 37% of their income on food, government intervention kept consumer price increases below 3%, eliminating one reason to protest.[59] Yemen stands out as the most susceptible to food riots, due to extremely high food dependency ratios, the poor fiscal position, and high dependency on food imports. Rich countries such as Israel and the Gulf monarchies also face large import dependencies. But since the population in these states generally spends a smaller share of its income on food, and the state has more resources to cushion price shocks, this is less of a security problem.

Food dependency is set to remain a potent source of conflict in the countries mentioned, because of their bad economic foresight. Poor GDP growth increases poverty, and thus food dependency ratios, while diminishing state capacity to soften the effects of price spikes. And in the long run, climate change, overgrazing and inefficient agriculture will increase water scarcity, land degradation and desertification in the region, thus further aggravating the risks of food shortages.[60] In Egypt alone, climate change is expected to lead to a reduction in domestic agricultural productivity of roughly 20 percent by 2030.[61] With a growing global demand, climate change could double major crop prices on the global market within the next few decades.[62] More extreme weather conditions in producer countries are likely to exacerbate food supply issues and price volatility, thus rendering these states more vulnerable to food riots and other forms of political violence.

Water Access

Large swathes of the MENA region remain parched. Again, geographical water scarcity need not be a security problem for richer states such as Qatar, Saudi-Arabia and Kuwait, which possess the economic means, industrial capabilities and the expensive infrastructure to redress it. Saudi Arabia and the UAE each spend over US$ 3 billion a year on water desalination treatment.[63] However, in states like **Yemen**, **Mali** and **Libya**, only a small part of the population (55, 65 and 55% respectively) has access to healthy water (see Map 5.6). Rural populations in Yemen are already struggling to reach water wells, and it has been predicted that its capital of Sana´a will run out of groundwater by 2017.[64] Such poor living conditions are indicative of government mismanagement and provide a source of grievance with low opportunity costs, which increases conflict potential.[65] Limited water access also catalyzes other factors conducive to conflict, such as migration flows, food dependency and infant mortality.[66]



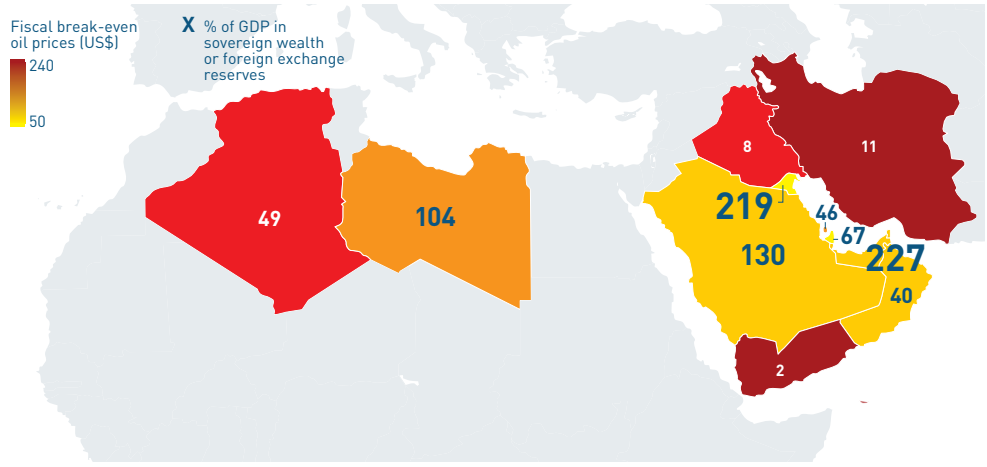
MAP 5.6. WATER ACCESS IN THE MENA REGION, 2012 (SOURCE: WORLD BANK).[67]

Other states with water access issues are **Morocco** (82%), **Algeria** (84%), **Iraq** (85%) and **the Palestinian Territories** (92%). It should be noted that conflict over water issues are often about much more than access to improved water. For example in Jordan, which has relatively high improved water access score of over 96%, increasing droughts are set to fuel existing divisions between native Jordanians and Palestinians (see the section on Religious and Ethnic Tensions). Such climatological changes put pressure on water and agricultural production, which are at the heart of the Jordanian system of political patronage, as well as many employment programs for the Jordanian Bedouins.[68]

Fuel-export Dependent Countries

Many MENA economies are energy-rich. They produce roughly 37% of the world's oil, and 18% of its gas. Moreover, 60% of the world's proven oil reserves and 45% of natural gas reserves are located in the region.[69] Though oil exports are a great source of wealth, they can also make states vulnerable to oil price fluctuations. Price drops can lead to a loss of export revenues, destabilize the economy and raise the risk of conflict, as people start protesting against poor economic performance of the state. And the personal costs of taking up arms against the state are much slimmer when you are jobless.[70] One of the best measures for vulnerability to drops in oil price is the fiscal break-even price: the oil price a state needs to sustain its expenses. The higher the fiscal break-even price, the higher the risk of economic and security problems when the price per barrel of oil drops. This will be all the more pressing when governments have lower financial reserves, such as sovereign wealth funds or foreign reserves, to plug potential deficits.

Looking at fiscal break-even prices and financial buffers (measured in percentage of GDP in sovereign wealth funds and foreign reserves), **Yemen** appears as the most vulnerable to a drop in oil prices (see Map 5.7). With an exorbitantly high break-even oil price of US$ 237 per barrel, current oil prices are widely insufficient to sustain its expenses. In addition, Yemen has almost no financial buffers to weather oil price fluctuations.[71] This high dependency is especially dangerous in light of prior attacks by militants on the Yemeni oil industry. In 2011, a militant attack caused a fuel crisis which lasted several months, and sparked violence in the streets.[72]



MAP 5.7 VULNERABILITY OF OIL AND GAS EXPORTING MENA COUNTRIES TO OIL SHOCKS, SHOWING FISCAL BREAK-EVEN OIL PRICES (RED=EXTREME, YELLOW=LOW) AND FINANCIAL POWER (% OF GDP IN SOVEREIGN WEALTH FUNDS AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES), 2013. COUNTRIES COLOURED RED AND WITH A LOW PERCENTAGE SCORE ARE MOST VULNERABLE (SOURCES: IMF, SOVEREIGN WEALTH FUND INSTITUTE, CIA WORLD FACTBOOK, WORLD BANK). [73]

Like Yemen, **Iran** (US$ 127) and **Iraq** (US$ 106) have a high fiscal break-even price, and little financial means to buy off unrest. Iran's economy has been hard hit in recent years by a combination of sidelined oil exports due to sanctions, high inflation (35% in January 2014) and a weakening national currency.[74] The Iranian population is struggling to maintain the middle-class lifestyles they were used to. The November 2013 deal reached between Iran and the P5+1 group on Iran's nuclear program is likely to provide some relief, as some US$ 4.2 billion in blocked funds will come available. Nevertheless, the most hard-hitting sanctions against Iran's oil exports will remain in place, meaning Teheran will remain highly vulnerable to fiscal difficulties and may experience civil unrest.[75]

Algeria (US$ 114) has larger but shrinking state coffers. The country, which is a key-supplier of natural gas to the EU, has so far managed to escape the revolts of the Arab Spring, mainly by redistributing some of the nation's wealth. However, this cannot be sustained indefinitely. If left unaddressed, the social, economic, and political grievances smoldering in Algerian society could lead to popular revolts that threaten the regime's survival.[76]

Libya (US$ 117) has greater financial buffers. Yet, like in Yemen, the unstable political and security situation exacerbates vulnerability, illustrated by the current sharp drop in oil exports due to rebels taking hold of several key ports. And similarly, **Bahrain's** (US$ 119) state coffers are shrinking, while it continues to face domestic protests.

Countries which are less vulnerable because of significant financial reserves and lower fiscal break-even prices are Kuwait (US$ 52), Qatar (US$ 55), the UAE (US$ 74), Saudi Arabia (US$ 84) and Oman (US$ 93). As the Arab Spring swept the region, Saudi Arabia managed to remain largely unaffected. It is however no coincidence that in late 2011, Riyadh approved a lavish stimulus package aimed at meeting social needs, education and health, and upgrading infrastructure, including housing. Moreover, the government paid out a two-month salary bonus to government employees, costing 35bn-40bn Saudi Riyal (approx. 9bn-11bn US$), while also raising the minimum public-sector wage and hiring an extra 60,000 staff for the interior ministry.[77]

Unconventional Energy

The surge in unconventional natural gas and oil production (notably in the US) is likely to leave its mark on the MENA region as well. As global demand for natural gas is projected to increase, shale gas can change the mix between natural gas and other fuels. In the short term this already takes place in North America, but in the medium (2020 till 2030) to long term, this will have effects globally. A shift in the global energy mix, in so far that it displaces oil, puts oil prices under pressure. And as a result, carries risks for countries with high oil rents.

Countries particularly vulnerable are those of the more instability prone anocratic regime-type, which also suffer from high youth unemployment *and* possess limited financial reserves. Algeria, Iran, Iraq, and Yemen score poorly on these variables and as such are particularly at risk of instability if oil prices were to decline due to shifts in the energy mix.

Furthermore, unconventional energy aside, the global drive towards greater sustainability and efficiency will in the long term also exert pressure on oil prices. Possibly even greater than is felt by unconventionals. Faced with expanding populations and an explosive domestic energy demand, the MENA region is likely to see oil export earnings to come under significant pressure.

Furthermore, compared to anocracies such as Yemen, Iraq and Algeria, the ruling elites in the true autocracies in the Gulf are more likely to crack down on emerging discontent out of fears that it may destabilize the regime. Alternatively, they may choose to directly interfere in nearby countries affected by civil unrest in order to quell any potential spillover.[78] A good example was the March 2011 decision by the Gulf Cooperation Council to send a contingent of armed forces of Saudi Arabia and the UAE into Bahrain to aid the government in Manama to suppress the growing internal unrest.[79] This observation again singles out Yemen, Iraq, Iran and Algeria as more vulnerable to internal unrest as a result of a decrease in the price of oil.

State response options to deal with sudden price drops are even further curtailed by economic imbalances. High levels of food and energy subsidies, for example, make cutting existing expenditure to deal with lower oil prices problematic. In 2011, food subsidies took up on average 0.7% of GDP for the entire region, and energy subsidies exceeded 5% of GDP for almost all oil exporting countries. Iran, Iraq, Algeria, Egypt, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Libya have fuel subsidies that are either close to, or well in excess of 10% of their GDP.[80] And as noted, many governments have increased their social and military spending to limit protest potential. If states decide to cut these subsidies, the population will be faced by steep food and fuel price increases, which people had been artificially shielded from in the past. There is ample evidence that such price shocks are a powerful source of conflict. When in 2012 the Jordanian king Abdullah II proposed to end gas and basic commodity subsidies to face a gaping fiscal deficit, widespread protests erupted.[81] And the Sudanese government's 2013 decision to halt fuel subsidies in light of ongoing economic difficulties resulted in riots, killings and injuring dozens of civilians in what was seen as the worst unrest in years.[82]

Religious and Ethnic Tensions

The MENA region is a chessboard of ethnic and religious groups. Many states are home to multiple creeds of Islam and a plethora of tribes and ethnic groups. From the Lebanese civil war that waged from 1975 to 1990, to the long-standing Israel-Palestine conflict, animosity between these groups is at the heart of many current and past conflicts. Some of the most entrenched and extreme conflicts concern stateless

nations striving for self-government, such as the Kurdish struggle for autonomy in Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq. Other conflicts are about ethnic or religious groups vying over control of the state, as in Iraq, where the new ruling Shi'a government consolidated power along religious lines, causing grievances with the Sunni minority. And finally, other, smaller scale conflicts are fuelled by extremism and/or government repression, as in Saudi Arabia, where Wahhabi (Sunni) rulers suppress the Shi'a minority. Below we look at the vulnerability of MENA states towards these types of ethnic and religious conflict in turn (an overview is provided in Table 5.1).

STATE	STRUGGLE FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT	INTENSITY	STRUGGLE FOR STATE CONTROL	INTENSITY	EXTREMIST VIOLENCE	INTENSITY	STATE REPRESSION OF MINORITIES	INTENSITY
Syria	Kurds	5	Alawite minority gov't vs. Sunni rebels	5				
			Sunni Extremists (ISIL) vs. Sunni moderates	3				
Iraq	Kurds	1	Shi'a gov't vs. Sunni minority	3	ISIL	5		
Yemen	Southern Insurgents	3			Houthi's	3		
					AQAP	5		
Israel-Palestinian Territories	Palestinian groups (PNA, Hamas)	3						
Mali	Tuareg rebels	3			AQIM	5		
Turkey	Kurds (PKK)	4						
Libya	Federalist Forces (Cyrenaica)	2	Tribes and warlords	4				
Egypt			Military vs. Muslim Brotherhood	5	Sinai Islamists	4	Copts	3
Algeria	Berbers	2			AQIM (temporarily joined forces with the Tuareg rebels in 2011/12)	4		
Iran	Kurds (PJAK)	3			Jundallah and other Sunni groups	3		
Morocco	Polisario (Western Sahara)	3			AQIM	2		
Bahrain			Minority Sunni gov't vs. Shi'a majority	3				
Lebanon			Christians vs. Sunni's vs. Shi'a (Hezbollah)	3				
Jordan			East-Bankers vs. Palestinians	2				
Saudi Arabia					Houthi's	1	Shi'a minority	4
					AQAP	2		
Tunisia					AQIM	4		
Kuwait							Bedouins	3

TABLE 5.1: OVERVIEW OF TYPES OF CONFLICTS ROOTED IN RELIGIOUS OR ETHNIC TENSIONS WITH THEIR 2013 LEVEL OF INTENSITY (SOURCE: HIIK CONFLICT BAROMETER 2013).[83]

Violent Struggle for Self-Government

Often longstanding struggles for self-government play in **Turkey**, **Syria**, **Iraq**, **Iran** (Kurdish groups), **Israel** and **the Palestinian Territories** (Palestinians), **Yemen** (Southern Insurgents), **Mali** (Tuareg rebels), **Morocco/the Western Sahara** (Polisario movement), **Libya** (Federalist Forces), and **Algeria** (Berbers) (see Table 5.1.). These conflicts are often fueled by governments discriminating against other nationalities within their borders, or remaining unresponsive to their demands for self-government.[84] And the more violent and historically entrenched the conflict, the more likely it is that they will continue in the future.

Other factors that may trigger or heighten the risk for struggles for self-government, are periods of political change, extremely violent conflicts, and large and concentrated ethnic and religious groups. New governments trying to consolidate power along ethnic or religious lines may fuel grievances between groups.[85] Civil wars are often caught in what has been labelled a "conflict trap", with unaddressed grievances exacerbating ethnic divisions, with an unstable compromise that has been agreed upon or human costs created a psychological barrier that makes a peace agreement less likely.[86] And large groups living in geographically concentrated areas will find it easier to recruit rebels.[87]

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular, with around 6 million Israeli Jews and 11 million Palestinians spread out over the Palestinian Territories and the rest of the region, has deep historic roots and a long history of violence.[88] The struggle for an independent Kurdistan, a state for the 30 million Kurds currently spread over Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria, is also likely to bequeath future conflict. The Kurds are one of the largest nations without a state, making up around 20% of the Turkish and Iraqi populations, respectively. Although a bilateral peace-process with Turkey was initiated at the eve of 2012, violence is likely to return if the hopes of Kurdish minority are unmet.[89] Meanwhile, the battle-tested Kurdish fighters could join those striving for Kurdish autonomy in Syria or Iran.[90] And although the Kurds have more autonomy in neighboring Iraq, a recent Kurdish-Turkish deal over oil exports is already increasing tensions with the central Iraqi government.

In Mali, the Tuareg, a tribal people of over 1 million living mostly in parts of Mali, Algeria and Mauritania, have been striving for self-government for over a century. After a coalition with al-Qaeda extremists in 2010, they managed for a brief period of time to control large parts of Northern Mali.[91] Taking into account the bad economic situation and political turmoil, it is unlikely that their plea for independence will die

down. And in Yemen, the secessionist movement in the South is rooted in the fact that it was a separate country until the 1990s. After the civil war with the North in 1994, the South became a definite part of modern day Yemen, but attacks by rebels from the South to enforce secession have since not abated. The poor economic prospects of the country, with its large youth bulge, high unemployment, and low GDP per capita, furthermore lower the bar for rebel recruitment. And the ongoing political turmoil also increases the chance of conflict.

In the Western Sahara, the Polisario movement has demanded a referendum over independence of the region since the UN brokered a ceasefire in 1991.[92] The group represents the Sahrawi people and has been striving in a violent guerilla warfare against the Moroccan government for a separate state since 1975, receiving aid and support from Algeria.[93] Though the conflict has de-escalated in recent years, smuggling has increased, with the Polisario movement selling aid supplies, transporting African migrants northwards toward Europe, and trafficking weapons and jihadists southwards.[94] And finally, smaller scale conflicts are ongoing between the Berber population and the Algerian government, and the Libyan state and the Federalist forces of Cyrenaica in the East of the country.

Struggle for State Control

Syria, **Iraq**, **Libya**, **Jordan**, **Lebanon**, **Bahrain** and **Egypt** are vulnerable to conflict over state control by specific ethnic or religious factions. In all these countries, two or more large ethnic or religious groups are fighting over state control.

Vulnerability is especially high in countries where the group vying for power is relatively large.[96] Many of the apparent and slumbering conflicts in the region relate to Sunni-Shi'a tensions. In extreme cases, a religious minority is ruling over a religious majority, as in Syria, with a ruling class of predominantly Alawites, who are closely related to Shi'a Islam, make up 12% of the population and are "ruling" over more than 70% Sunni (see Figure 5.4). And in Bahrain, a Sunni minority of about 20% is governing a country with over 60% Shi'a. In these cases, the pool for rebel recruitment is particularly large, and the numerical balance lies in favor of the group contesting the government. As a response, governments often frame political protests as ethnic or religious extremism. The Bahraini government, for example, has dubiously described protests as an Iranian sponsored attempt of Shi'a groups to oust the monarch.[97] It should however be noted that Sunnis and Shi'ites do not automatically form cohesive, likeminded and opposed groups, as the split between extremist (ISIL – Islamic State Iraq and the Levant) and more moderate rebels in Syria illustrates.

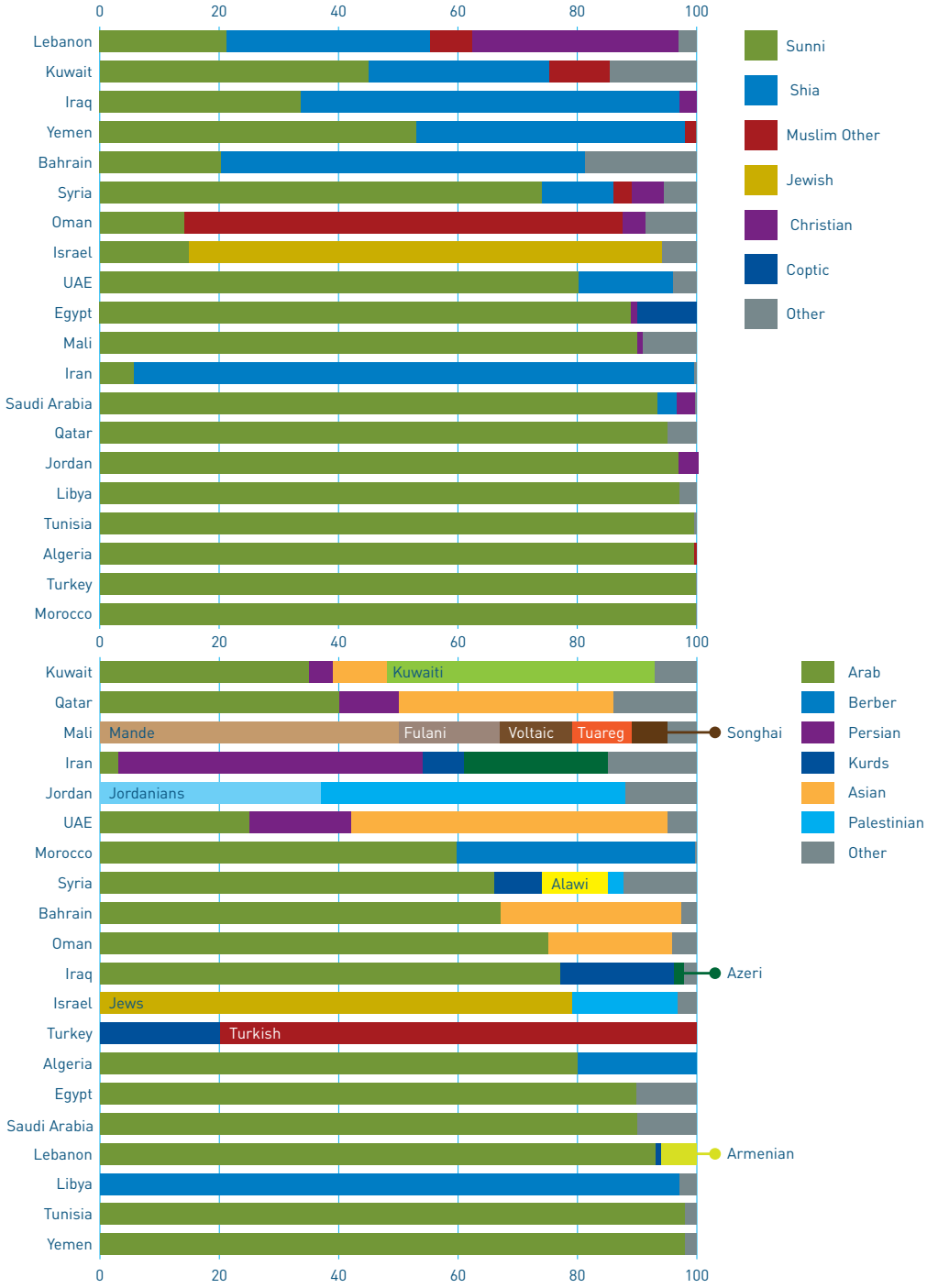


FIGURE 5.4: RELIGIOUS (TOP) AND ETHNIC (BOTTOM) FRACTIONALIZATION ACROSS THE MENA REGION, 2011 (SOURCES: ALESINA ET AL. [2003]; UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG).[95]

In Iraq, the government is predominantly recruited from Shi'a ranks that make up 60% of the population. Here too the government is sowing seeds for future conflict by enacting anti-Sunni policies, a group which accounts for roughly 30% of the population. States where discrimination is less pervasive, such as in Kuwait, which has a Shi'a minority of around 30% compared to more than 60% Sunni's, are much less conflict prone. It is telling that the decision to assist the GCC intervention in Bahrain to squash the predominantly Shi'a protestors in 2011 ultimately led to the government's resignation in order to diffuse sectarian tensions.

Lebanon remains highly vulnerable to conflict between Christian, Sunni and Shi'a groups. Though it is a democracy, and political access is more equal than in many MENA countries, the remnants of the violent civil war that raged from 1975 to 1990 still loom underneath the surface. Tensions are palpable, as the 2013 car bombs in the streets of Beirut testify. Private armies that used to fight each other during the war are still active. The situation is further exacerbated by the prevalent power of Hezbollah, its conflict with Israel and its fight alongside the Assad regime in the Syrian civil war. At the same time, Lebanese Sunni groups support the rebels. And the conflict in neighboring Syria has also led to a large stream of refugees into the country. This illustrates that conflict in a neighboring country significantly increases a state's likelihood of experiencing conflict itself.[98]

Palestinian and Syrian refugees are also adding to existing ethnic tensions in Jordan. East Bankers, which account for less than 40% of the population, have historically had privileged access to government jobs, which often exclude Palestinians (around 50% of the population).[99] The long lasting discrimination that flared up in the Arab Spring protests were subdued by piecemeal political reforms by King Abdullah II. And in Libya, various tribes are jumping in the power vacuum, competing for power, while religious extremists and warlords fight over parts of the country.[100] Finally, the military coup against the Morsi-led Muslim Brotherhood government in Egypt and the subsequent banning of the party from politics rekindles a secular/religious divide that is reminiscent of pre-Arab Spring dictators in the region.

Extremism

Northern African states and **Iraq**, **Yemen**, and **Saudi Arabia** are all susceptible to extremist violence emerging from smaller groups that try to impose an ideology or different state system.[101] Such violence often flares up in conflict-ridden countries, where state control of territories is poor. Looking at current conflict intensity, Iraq, Yemen, Mali, Algeria and Tunisia are particularly susceptible. Iraq remains highly

vulnerable to terrorist attacks, with a resurgent al-Qaeda faction boosted by the fighting in Syria as part of ISIL.[102] Activities of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) have increased in recent years, especially in Algeria, culminating in the Amenas hostage crisis in early 2013.[103] And al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has its base and the bulk of its activities in Yemen, making it likely that the country will experience extremist attacks in coming years. The country is also struggling with al-Houthi extremists, with their motto "Allah is great, death to America, death to Israel, damnation to the Jews, the victory to Allah". The Houthi tribe is cementing its hold on territories in the North and conducting terrorist attacks in both Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Egypt is facing a long-standing struggle with terrorist groups in the Sinai desert. And although Tunisia also has some extremist groups within its border, most notably Ansar al-Sharia, the small size of the group renders the country less vulnerable to terrorist attacks.

State Repression of Minorities

In **Kuwait**, **Saudi Arabia** and **Egypt**, governments are involved in the systematic repression of minorities. State repression can both be the origin of and response to extremist violence.[104] In Kuwait, the government refuses to grant citizenship to stateless Arabs in order to justify expulsion and ongoing discrimination.[105] The Copts have been subject to discrimination in Egypt, which has increased the ongoing political turmoil, while decreasing security guarantees.[106] And Saudi Arabia has repeatedly discriminated against the Shi'a minority, which it frames as dangerous extremists. These conflicts are generally more small-scale, because of the large power asymmetry between governments and repressed groups.

The Paths to Conflict

The main vulnerability scores of MENA countries for the four paths of conflict are summarized in Table 5.2.

COUNTRIES	SFI SCORE	POLITICAL TURMOIL	ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES	FUEL EXPORT DEPENDENCY	RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC TENSIONS
Iraq	20				
Yemen	17				
Libya	15				
Syria	11				
Pal. Territories	N/A				
Mali	19				
Algeria	15				
Egypt	11				
Iran	12				
Bahrain	9				
Jordan	7				
Tunisia	5				
Morocco	7				
Israel	8				
Saudi Arabia	9				
Lebanon	5				
Turkey	7				
Oman	5				
Kuwait	4				
Qatar	4				
UAE	3				

TABLE 5.2: MENA COUNTRIES CATEGORIZED ON TYPE OF VULNERABILITY (DARK RED = HIGH; MEDIUM RED = MEDIUM; LIGHT RED = LOW).[107]

The most vulnerable countries are Iraq, Yemen, Syria, the Palestinian Territories, Mali, and Libya. These states are highly vulnerable to conflict erupting due to unstable political institutions, high levels of poverty and social concerns, and wide spread religious and ethnic tensions. The first three could also see conflict arise if oil prices drop. All six countries experience high levels of current conflict, which underlines that conflict begets conflict.

Our analysis also points towards the vulnerability of some less-than-usual suspects, such as Algeria, Jordan and Bahrain. Algeria is particularly fragile, with high vulnerability to declining oil prices, simmering religious tensions, poor economic performance and an unstable political situation. Jordan is fraught with tension between the ruling

monarch and different ethnic groups, and poor economic prospects. Bahrain has Shi'a dissent brewing under the surface, and relatively high vulnerability to oil shocks.

Tunisia's transition towards democracy looks most promising, although here again economic issues are a continuing concern. Democratization in Egypt is more fragile, with the country facing pressing economic issues and religious tensions. Iran is highly vulnerable to oil price shocks, and has experienced troubling economic decline, in part due to sanctions. Vulnerability in Morocco is mostly a concern of economic and social issues, with high levels of food dependency and stagnating growth.

Countries with lower vulnerability are Israel, Lebanon, Turkey and the remaining Gulf countries (Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, and the UAE). To be sure, these countries are susceptible to particular paths of conflict, predominantly related to ethnic and religious tensions (especially in Israel and Lebanon) and oil price shocks (in the Gulf monarchies).

5.5 Impact on Europe

For the foreseeable future, the Southern and South-Eastern borders of Europe look set to remain ridden in conflict. This is particularly worrisome for European states, since instability in the region will likely affect their economic and security interests. This section looks at the potential impact conflicts may have on these European interests.

Security Impact

Security interests of European states may be negatively impacted by refugee flows; increasing organized crime; rising piracy concerns; terrorist attacks on European targets; and outright military confrontation.

Refugee Flows to Europe

Conflict may spark refugee flows that affect Europe. Ethnic and religious strife in particular tend to spur large-scale refugee streams, both internally and across borders.[108] Although refugee flows are foremost a regional concern, people fleeing from violent conflicts also end up in Europe. And asylum applications in Europe from MENA countries are strongly correlated with conflict (see Figure 5.5). After the Arab Spring, refugee streams have increased: in 2012, EU states saw around 72,000 asylum seekers from the MENA region, up from around 45,000 in 2010.[109] Over 2011 and 2012, on average 130 MENA refugees applied for asylum per one million EU inhabitants.

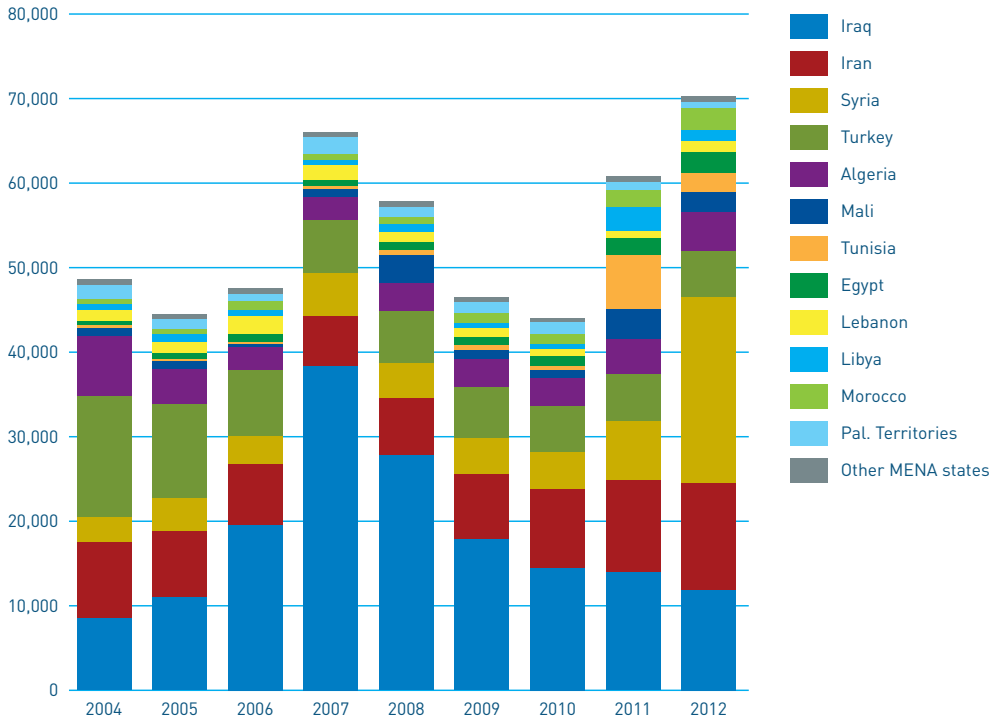


FIGURE 5.5: ASYLUM APPLICATIONS FROM MENA STATE NATIONALS IN EU-28 COUNTRIES (SOURCE: UNHCR).[110]

The burden of these refugees is highest for Malta and Cyprus, who saw 623 and 859 asylum applicants per million inhabitants in the same period.[111] And although the relative number of refugees applying in Italy and Greece is not higher than in many Western EU-states, the large economic difficulties in these countries mean that there are fewer incentives and resources to accommodate refugees.[112] Furthermore, the impact of refugee streams in states bordering the Mediterranean is much more visible and leads to larger humanitarian concerns. The UNHCR raised the alarm after over 15.000 refugees arrived on the Italian island of Lampedusa in the first three months of 2011.[113] In addition, more than 400 people died in October 2013, after a boat sank south of the Island.[114]

There is no evidence to suggest that migrants are more criminal or radical than local populations.[115] However, the influx of refugees may lead to friction with local populations and thereby challenge social cohesion, especially since many refugees from the MENA region are Muslims coming to predominantly Christian countries with increasingly popular right-wing parties.[116] For example, in Germany, right-wing motivated attacks on asylum homes doubled in 2013.[117]

Organized crime

The refugee problems on Lampedusa indicate that human trafficking tends to increase when conflicts erupt.[118] Because not all can freely enter Europe or expect to be granted asylum, refugees may turn to human traffickers, and thereby put themselves at risk of exploitation. Other forms of organized crime, such as weapons smuggling and drug trafficking are predominantly a regional concern.[119] Due to increased instability in Libya, for example, new trade routes are opening up and allowing for the spread of drugs and weapons.[120]

One form of criminal activity that may increase following conflict, and which poses security risks to European states, is piracy. The risk is particularly high in countries where the central authorities lack control over their territory bordering important waterways, as is already the case in piracy hotbeds Yemen and Somalia. An escalation of the conflict in Libya could spark piracy concerns in waterways bordering the country. Egypt is also at risk, albeit to a smaller extent. Bedouins, Palestinians and terrorist groups based in the Sinai Peninsula might attack ships passing the Suez Canal. Though the Egyptian state has a more effective army capable of halting such attacks, this is no far-fetched scenario: in 2009, 26 people were arrested for plotting attacks on ships and pipelines passing through the Suez Canal.[121]

Foreign Fighters Coming Home

Conflict in the MENA region may attract religiously inspired foreign fighters from Europe. When these fighters return, they can pose significant national security risks. Battle-tested foreign fighters are more likely and effective in plotting attacks due to the training, knowledge, contacts and combat experience they received abroad – also called the "veteran effect".[122] Yet because these fighters often do not return to their home country, as a *group* they do not necessarily pose a greater risk to national security than jihadists not leaving the country.[123] Although the threat is difficult to assess, the risks are real. When the young Algerian-Frenchman and Salfist Mohammed Merah received Al-Qaeda training in Afghanistan and Pakistan and returned to France in March 2012, he killed seven people in an anti-Semitist attack.[124]

The foreign fighter phenomenon is not new. In the past, Europeans have joined militant campaigns abroad, including several hundred Muslims fighting in the Bosnian civil war, or Salafists picking up arms in Afghanistan and Iraq following the US invasion. But the number of young Muslims now joining predominantly al-Qaeda affiliated groups like Jabhat al-Nusra and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in the Syrian civil war is unprecedented.[125] The conflict has drawn in somewhere between

396 and 1930 European foreign fighters, among which 29-152 from the Netherlands (see Figure 5.6). Illustrative of the risks involved was a recent report of European recruits in Syria that were trained in bomb-making in order to wreak havoc back home.[126]

STATE	NUMBER OF FOREIGN FIGHTERS	PER MILLION
France	63-412	6
United Kingdom	43-366	6
Belgium	76-296	27
Germany	34-240	3
Netherlands	29-152	9
Spain	34-95	2
Sweden	39-87	9
Denmark	25-84	15
Austria	1-60	7
Italy	2-50	1
Ireland	11-26	6
Finland	4-20	4
Luxembourg	1	1
Total	**396-1930**	**7**

FIGURE 5.6: EUROPEAN FOREIGN FIGHTERS IN SYRIA, DECEMBER 2013 (SOURCE: ICSR).[127]

The extreme and rising attraction of the Syrian conflict to European jihadists can partly be explained by the accessibility of the conflict.[128] Jihadists may prefer Syria over Mali, for example, because a ticket to Timbuktu is more expensive than a ticket to Turkey, from where it is a bus ride to the border with Syria.[129] And finding a military group of choice is relatively easy.[130] Rebels also control significant amounts of the territory that provides low in-theatre risks and attracts both risk-seeking and risk-averse fighters.[131] And because of the large Muslim civilian casualties, foreign fighters may regard their activities as a militarized form of humanitarian assistance.[132] Finally, because the conflict is frequently portrayed as a sectarian struggle between Sunni and Shi'a (Alawite) groups, this may draw in jihadist fighters adamant on settling the score with sectarian enemies.[133]

Apart from Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen are also prone to religious conflicts that may attract foreign fighters from Europe. These states all have a high risk of sectarian conflict, with large radical Muslim groups within their borders. For example, if the Syrian conflict spills over to Lebanon, inciting conflict between Sunni and Shi'a groups, this may prove an additional boon for foreign European fighters. Northern African States also have Muslim terrorist groups within their borders, but since the size, battles, and media-exposure of these groups is smaller, the risk of foreign fighters joining these conflicts is lower.

Terrorist Attacks on European Targets

Instability in parts of the MENA creates safe havens for terrorist organizations that may attack European targets. These groups will find it easier to attack western targets in the region than in Europe – from kidnapping people to attacking oil platforms or embassies.[134] The deadly attack on the US consulate in Benghazi in September 2012 illustrates that the risk is particular high in states lacking effective central authority. This marks European interests in Libya, Mali, Syria, Iraq, and Mali as particularly vulnerable. All these states have large al-Qaeda affiliated terrorist groups within their borders. Within the larger Sahel area, AQIM has kidnapped numerous Europeans, among them Dutch, Swedish, British and German tourists, who where kidnapped in Timbuktu at the end of November 2011, and whose whereabouts remain unclear.[135]

If the situation in post Arab-Spring Tunisia and Egypt deteriorates, terrorist groups in these countries may also find it easier to conduct similar activities. The strength of these groups may increase due to foreign fighters from the MENA region joining the battle in Syria. Just as with European foreign fighters, these veteran jihadists may pose increasing security risks once they return to their home country.

Military Confrontation

Conflicts may escalate horizontally and lead to interstate conflict between European and MENA states. Such a scenario seems unlikely, however, since only one European country directly borders a MENA state – i.e. Greece neighboring relatively stable Turkey. The Mediterranean Sea, along with European military supremacy, function as geographic and military buffers, respectively. Yet European states could be drawn into conflicts via militarily interventions, as was the case in Libya. Such a 'suck-in effect' is becoming more likely considering the American rebalancing to Asia, and increasing terrorist threats and humanitarian concerns in the region.

Economic Impact

Economically, Europe may feel the brunt of conflict in the MENA region in the form of interruptions in direct oil and gas supplies, or price spikes on the global oil market. To a lesser extent, disruptions in (non-fuel) commodities, or the damaging of regional investments may also negatively impact European economic interests.

Oil Price Spikes

Geopolitical upheavals in the oil-producing MENA region can lead to sharply increased global oil prices as a result of (fears of) a fall in supply. History is full of examples of conflict sparking oil price spikes – from the aftermath of the 1973 OPEC oil embargo to the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings (see Figure 5.7).[136] Oil prices can also be pushed up by increasing regional tensions and the *threat* of conflict alone, such as when the 2006 Israel-Lebanon war sparked fears of a war with Iran, pushing the oil price past 78 US$ a barrel, or when Iran threatened to block the Strait of Hormuz in 2011-2012.[137]

OIL PRICE (WEST TEXAS INTERMEDIATE) AND IMPORTANT (GEOPOLITICAL) EVENTS
1970-2012

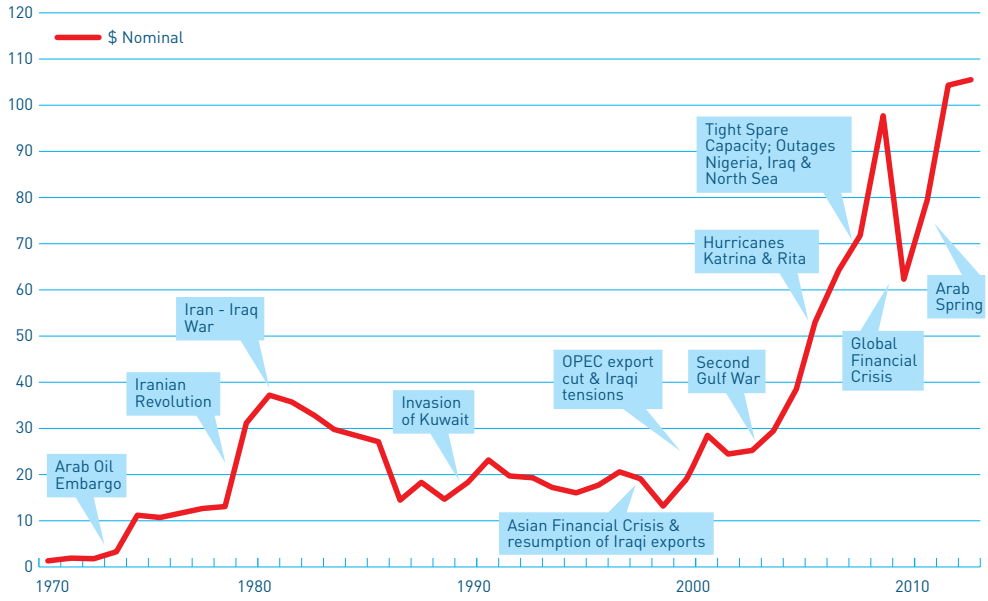


FIGURE 5.7: SPOT CRUDE OIL (WESTERN TEXAS INTERMEDIATE) PRICES (IN NOMINAL US$ PER BARREL) AND IMPORTANT (GEOPOLITICAL) EVENTS 1970-2012 (SOURCE: WORLD BANK).[138]

If conflicts erupt in the MENA region that threaten to destabilize oil and gas flows, this will likely drive up oil prices. This is problematic for European states that are heavily dependent on oil imports to meet high levels of domestic energy consumption. With the exception of Denmark and Norway, which are net oil exporters, and Estonia, Romania and the UK, which have oil import dependencies of 55,6%, 46,6%, and 26,8% respectively, all European states have very high oil import dependencies of over 80% (see Figure 5.8).[139] The economic impact of an oil price spike will be larger if oil import dependent countries need more energy to produce goods and services. Many former Soviet states in Eastern Europe, most notably Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, and Romania, have inefficient economies with disproportionately large heavy industry sectors, making them extremely energy-intensive.[140] For instance, many require more than 500 kg of oil equivalent to produce 1000 US$ in wealth, compared to 147 kg of oil in the Netherlands. This further amplifies their vulnerability to oil price spikes.

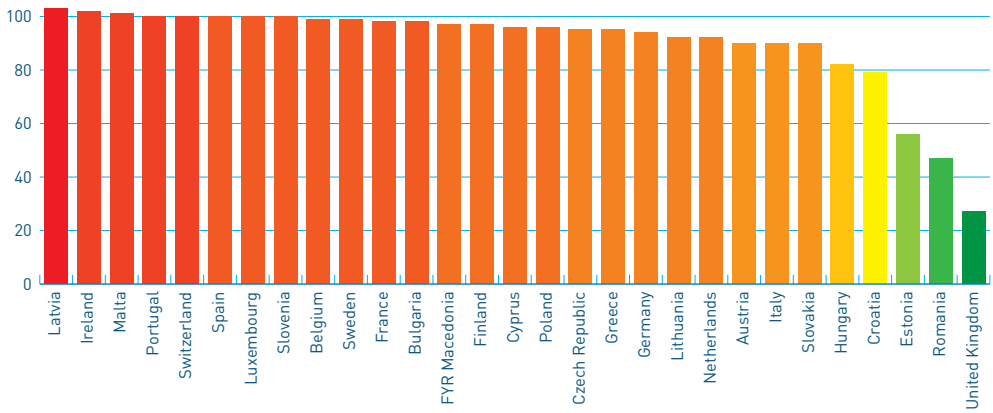


FIGURE 5.8: OIL IMPORT DEPENDENCY (% OF TOTAL DOMESTIC OIL CONSUMPTION), 2011 (SOURCE: EUROSTAT).[141]

Disruptions in MENA Energy Supply Flows

Conflict in the MENA region may also affect European economic interests by disrupting oil and natural gas production or transport to Europe. In 2011 for instance, the Libyan government suspended most of its upstream gas activities and shut down the Greenstream pipeline, leaving Saudi Arabia to jump in for lost oil supplies.[142] Many states, particularly Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Belgium and France, are dependent on oil and gas from the MENA region (see Figure 5.9). The economies of these countries are to a large extent fueled by energy imports, with substantial amounts

coming from MENA states. A disruption of these oil/gas supplies would mean such European states would be pressed to look for other providers of these fuels in an increasingly competitive market.

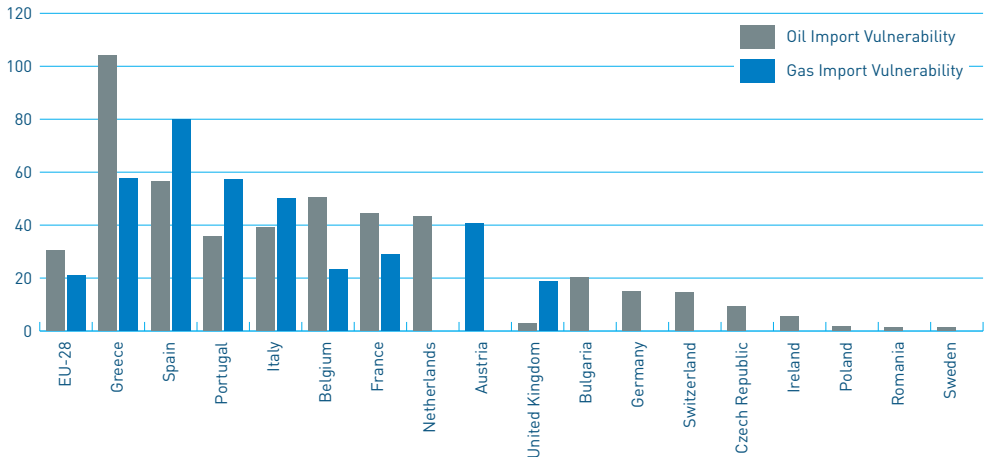


FIGURE 5.9 EUROPEAN MENA ENERGY IMPORT VULNERABILITY SCORES, FOR OIL AND NATURAL GAS. FIGURES SHOW HOW DEPENDENT EUROPEAN STATES ARE ON OIL AND GAS IMPORTS FROM THE MENA REGION. FIGURES CALCULATED ON THE BASIS OF ENERGY IMPORT RATES (2013), ENERGY DEPENDENCY (2013) AND ENERGY INTENSITY OF THE ECONOMY (2011). (SOURCE: EUROSTAT).[143]

Because oil is a fungible resource that is sold on global markets, disruptions are generally less problematic than interruptions in natural gas flows. Oil tankers can be rerouted with little added cost, states are therefore usually able to secure alternative suppliers, as the US and the Netherlands first did during the 1973 OPEC oil embargo.[144] The economic impact of substituting for large supply disruptions, is further buffered by steps the European countries have undertaken following the oil shocks of the 1970s. Oil has been stockpiled, economies have become less energy-intensive, and most importantly, the portfolio of oil suppliers has been diversified.[145]

Although most oil imports to Europe come from relatively stable Gulf countries (Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Kuwait), significant amounts are imported from countries that are highly vulnerable to conflict, such as Iraq, Libya and Algeria (see Figure 5.10). This is especially worrisome for France, the United Kingdom, and Portugal, with high oil import dependency from Algeria. Italy, Switzerland and Greece, import large amounts of oil from Libya, and Spain is dependent on Iraqi oil imports. The Netherlands imports around one third of its oil from the MENA region, with 7% coming from Iraq, and the rest is imported predominantly from Saudi Arabia (over 10%) and Kuwait (around 8%).

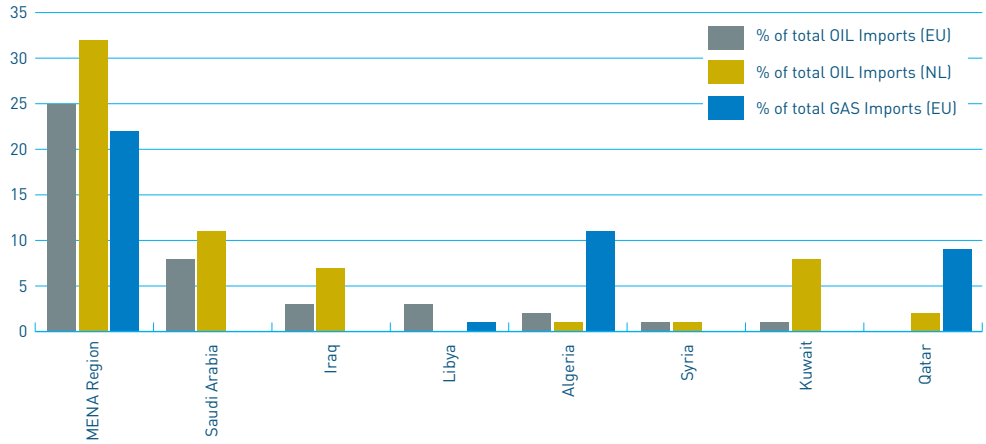


FIGURE 5.10 OIL AND GAS IMPORTS FROM MENA STATES TO THE EU (2011), FURTHER SPECIFIED BY OIL-IMPORTS (TO THE EU-28, AND TO THE NETHERLANDS). ONLY STATES THAT HAVE A SIZABLE OIL AND GAS EXPORT RELATION WITH EUROPEAN STATES ARE INCLUDED (SOURCE: EUROSTAT).[146]

Gas disruptions will have a more adverse effect on European states that are highly dependent on such imports. In contrast to oil, natural gas is frequently transported via an elaborate infrastructure of fixed long-distance pipelines. Although the emergence of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) conversion processes is slowly making natural gas more fungible, 'conventional', piped natural gas is still the dominant form of gas transport, and it remains a predominantly regionally traded resource. Buyers and sellers of 'conventional' natural gas remain 'locked in' in their economic relationship.

Nearly a quarter of all EU gas imports come from Algeria and Qatar (see Figure 5.10). While Qatar is relatively stable, Algeria is much more fragile and more prone to supply disruptions. Particularly southern European countries such as Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal, as well as Slovenia, derive large fractions of their imports from Algeria. Moreover, in 2011, these states still had sizeable natural gas imports from Libya and, in the form of LNG, Egypt. Since 2011 however, overall Egyptian gas exports have greatly diminished. Furthermore, years of attacks on its Arab Gas Pipeline resulted in frequent and crippling supply disruptions to Israel and Jordan, and in 2012 Egypt cancelled a gas deal with Israel.[147] Meanwhile LNG exports to Europe dropped by about a quarter over 2012,[148] and the succeeding year Egypt was forced to ask Russia to help fulfill its gas supply contracts to Europe.[149] The Netherlands has no exposure to these risks, since it is a net gas exporter.

Paradoxically, instability elsewhere in the MENA region might make fuel suppliers less vulnerable. While spillover risks from neighboring countries in conflict may increase, a rise in global oil prices could improve revenues of fuel-exporting MENA states, which would provide economic benefits that may, for instance, increase their ability to buy-off protests. On the other hand, an increase in global oil supplies, for example following a détente in Western relations with Iran, could have a dampening effect on oil prices.[150] This might insulate or even boost energy import-dependent European industries, while leaving rich fuel-exporting MENA states such as Saudi-Arabia more vulnerable to domestic unrest (see also the section on Fuel-export Dependency).

Trade and Investment Risks

Other negative impacts on European economic interests that may follow from conflict in the region include disruptions in non-fuel commodity trade, and bad return-on-investments. Conflicts hinder productivity and curb consumer confidence, and may increase the risk of insurgency or piracy in coastal states near important trade routes, such as the Suez Canal or the Strait of Gibraltar.[151]

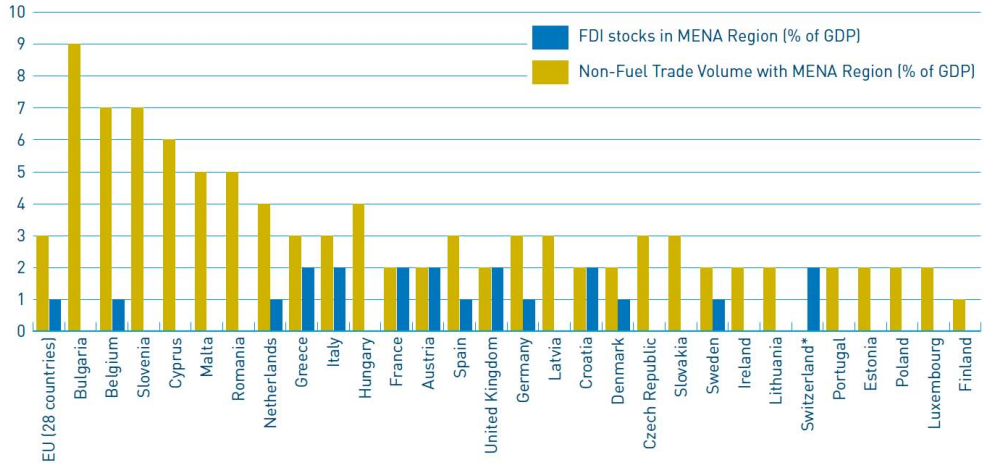


FIGURE 5.11: NON-FUEL TRADE VOLUME (IMPORT + EXPORT) WITH MENA STATES; AND STOCKS OF FDI INVESTMENTS IN THE MENA REGION, % OF EUROPEAN STATE GDP, 2012 (SOURCES: EUROSTAT, IMF WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK).[152]

Although most European states trade more intensely with more stable, richer countries in the region, such as Turkey, the UAE and Saudi-Arabia, southern European states such as France, Italy, Spain and Portugal, import and export sizeable sums of goods to and from more unstable North African countries such as Algeria, Libya and Tunisia. Bulgaria, Slovenia and Malta trade a lot with Egypt and Iraq. On average 2,68% of trade volume is with MENA states.

Total European Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the MENA region is relatively low, at around 1% of GDP (see Figure 5.11), and overwhelmingly concentrated in Turkey and a number of rich Gulf states. Yet it should be noted that European economic assets in the region may also provide an easily accessible target for terrorists in the region. For example, the multi-billion dollar Desertec solar energy project, which spans large parts of North Africa, is increasingly under threat from terrorists, which find it easier to operate and acquire means to conduct such activities following the instability emanating from conflicts in Mali and Libya.[153] The return on investments in Egypt is uncertain in light of the unstable political situation. This is problematic for Switzerland, Greece, France, Italy, and the UK, which have all invested relatively heavily in the north African state. Dutch investments in the MENA region are higher than average, but concentrated in the more stable Turkey, Saudi-Arabia, Israel, and the UAE.

5.6 Security Implications

The MENA region is in turmoil. Despite some hopeful developments, such as the green shoots of new democracies, states in the region are not on a one-way street towards stability. The road ahead will be long and winding. To help gauge the vulnerability of MENA states to specific forms of conflict, we analyzed four paths to conflict. And conflict may furthermore radiate to Europe, impacting the security and economic interests of states on the continent.

Countries to Watch

Regimes presiding over changing political institutions or facing existential threat are more vulnerable to conflicts, because they are less apt at mitigating turmoil, and fragile institutions create an incentive for people and groups to try and shape the political context. This is particularly so when **political turmoil** is violent in a state where power is or was highly concentrated. *High vulnerability: Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Syria, Mali. Medium vulnerability: Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, Palestinian Territories.*

Economic and social issues hamper many states in the region and regularly spark protests. The Arab Spring has amplified economic problems in many countries, especially in those that were most affected by the upheavals. In richer countries in the Gulf, food and water issues are predominantly an economic concern that states can buy-off by subsidizing consumption and importing water and food, or investing in desalination and irrigation. In many MENA states, economic and social problems are aggravated by large cohorts of unemployed youngsters, which offer a 'supply of cheap rebel labor'. *High vulnerability: Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Syria, Palestinian Territories, Mali, Egypt. Medium vulnerability: Algeria, Jordan, Tunisia, Morocco, Iran.*

Fuel export dependent countries that rely on oil and gas revenues to fill state coffers and have limited financial buffers are more vulnerable to a decline in oil price. *High vulnerability: Iraq, Yemen, Algeria, Iran. Medium vulnerability: Libya, Bahrain, Oman.*

Religious and ethnic tensions are widely spread throughout the region, with multiple states remaining vulnerable to specific types of religious and ethnic conflict. Large-scale conflicts may erupt due to nations looking for a state or sizeable ethnic and/or religious groups vying for state control. Smaller-scale ethnic and religious violence may emanate from (smaller) extremist groups where state control of territories is poor, or where governments suppress minorities. *Vulnerability to secessionist movements: Kurdish areas (Iraq, Iran, Syria, Turkey), Western Sahara (Morocco), Yemen, Mali, Israel, Algeria, Libya and the Palestinian Territories. Vulnerability to struggle for state control: Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon. Vulnerability to smaller-scale ethnic and religious violence: Iraq, Yemen, Mali, Iran, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Kuwait.*

Impact on Europe

Conflicts in the MENA region affect the security and economic situation in Europe in various ways.

Security Impact

Refugee flows are mostly a regional concern, but increasing conflict on the borders of Europe does lead to (illegal) immigration, especially to Southern Europe (Cyprus and Malta in particular). Indirectly, this puts pressure on EU visa agreements and may fuel social instability in countries with large refugee communities.

Conflicts may draw in **European jihadists**. When these battle-tested veterans return, they may pose increased national security risks. Although the precise risks are difficult to assess, future sectarian and easily accessible conflicts may draw in similar amounts of foreign fighters as is now the case in Syria. Lebanon, Iraq, Libya, and to a lesser extent Mali and Algeria are vulnerable to these dynamics.

Terrorist attacks against European targets in the region is an increasing concern in countries where state authority is weak, such as in Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Syria, the Palestinian Territories and Mali.

Organized crime, such as drug trafficking and weapons smuggling, is (still) predominantly a regional concern. Human trafficking is increasing following conflicts on the borders of Europe.

The chances of conflicts **escalating horizontally** and spilling across borders to Europe is small, but conflicts worsen the security and humanitarian situation in the region and may thereby lower the threshold for European states to intervene militarily.

Economic impact

Increasing oil prices may impact European interests. Actual conflict, or the fear of increased violence in the region has historically driven up oil prices. Since most European countries import oil to meet their energy needs (exceptions are Norway, Denmark, and, to a lesser extent, the UK, Romania and Estonia), this has the potential to hamper European economic growth. This is even more concerning in countries with very fuel intensive economies, as is the case in many Eastern European countries. This danger is particularly high when conflict erupts in or near oil producing countries or important trade routes.

Fuel supply disruptions are less problematic than price spikes, but may nevertheless lead to short term economic problems due to rerouting of imports. Interruptions of gas imports are most concerning, since they are less fungible and sold on regional markets. This renders European states that import gas from Algeria – France, Spain and Italy - particularly vulnerable to supply disruptions.

To a lesser extent, conflicts leading to disruptions in **(non-fuel) trade flows** and **poor return on investments** in the region may impact European states. Investments are relatively small, with around 1% of GDP in FDI stocks in the region in 2012, and 2,68% of GDP in (non-fuel) trade volume in the same year. Most trade and investment goes to and comes from more stable states in the region (Turkey, the UAE and Saudi-Arabia). Yet France, Italy, Spain and Portugal, trade relatively more with more vulnerable Northern African countries such as Algeria, Libya, Tunisia and Egypt.

6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This report presents the HCSS contribution to the Dutch government's ongoing development of a stronger strategic anticipation capability. It consists of four separate studies that cover some crucial elements influencing the dynamics of the global security environment and the security implications thereof for the Netherlands and/in Europe. We stress that:

- despite the fact that there are clearly various linkages and overlaps, the four sub-studies should be seen as stand-alone efforts, with results that should be seen in the context of the particular topic covered. This is true to the 'multi-perspective' approach that lies at the heart of the HCSS approach to strategic foresight;

- although the four topics are crucial in understanding the global security environment, they by no means cover all of the dynamics of that environment. Therefore, this year's effort should emphatically not be seen a sort of condensed broad horizon scan.

Having said that, we do feel the urge to place this year's conclusions in the context of the continuous HCSS Strategic Monitor process, and in particular to relate them to the main conclusions of last year's broad horizon scan. In these 'final considerations' – deliberately not called 'final conclusions' – we cautiously do so.

State and non state actors. First, last year we concluded that state actors had reclaimed a dominant role in the international system in recent years. We then put this against a longer-term countervailing trend of the growing ascendancy of non-state actors – international organizations, NGOs, multinationals, terrorist groups and others – in international affairs. This year, we come to a more differentiated view of the entire state/non state dichotomy.

Over the past decades, the power of the state has faced – and continues to face – a major onslaught by the 'non-state' in different guises: in the form of an ever more emancipated, educated and self-confident (national, regional and global) civil society; in the form of powerful non-state global economic actors such as financial institutions, rating agencies, global companies, but also in the form of various, local but now also global, non-state security actors like terrorists, cyber-hactivists, etc. Through new global regulatory efforts, through massive injections by national sovereigns in the international financial system and through large-scale investments in the security response to terrorism after 9/11, states tried, not without success, to reclaim the reins of the international system. But it remains to be seen how sustainable this recent upsurge in 'state' activism will prove to be.

One of this year's sub-studies takes a closer look at the role of non-state actors, precisely in the context of the power distribution between state and non-state actors. This sub-study throws a somewhat different light on the 'state vs. non state actors' axis in the *Verkenningen* scenario framework in two main regards. First of all, both terms are more ambivalent than they may seem at first sight. A 'state' might seem to be a notion with a clear foundation in international law; and a non-state might therefore seem equally easily defined as the opposite of a 'state'. And yet it is clear – as we also see in this years sub-study on the great-powers – that states are not created equal. They come in all shapes and forms and these differences matter greatly for both international cooperation and conflict. Non-state actors too come in an extremely wide variety. In the sub-study we have focused on one specific type of non state actors, namely civil society non-state actors. But there are many others, again with different characteristics and security implications. We also observe various alliances between states and non-state actors that are hard to 'place' in the one-dimensional axis. And of course, the more activities become networked-based, the harder it is to attribute cause and effect to any individual actor or groups of actors. All of this means, again, that the dichotomy between the 'state' and the 'non-state' is not nearly as clear-cut as the framework's axis suggests. Furthermore, the axis also suggest a certain 'zero-sum power game' between the state and the non-state that is not immediately apparent from our findings, where – as we just noted - we see evidence of growing power on both sides.

Cooperation and conflict. Second, last year we saw no clear tipping of the balance between states pursuing multilateral cooperation or engaging in conflict. The movement, so to speak, on the horizontal 'cooperative/non-cooperative' axis of the scenario framework the period 2010-2013 seemed quite diffuse. This year, we devoted

significant efforts in developing a better evidence base for analyzing the cooperative and conflictual behavior of two great powers – China and Russia – over the past few decades. This sub-study, which was based on data up to the Fall of 2013 (and therefore did not include some of the most risky behavior by both states, culminating in the Russia's '*Blitz-Anschluss*' of the Crimea in March 2014) came to a remarkably robust finding of increased assertiveness by both China an Russia over the past decade, not only rhetorically ('talking the talk') but also in actual behavior ('walking the walk'). This is an important finding, because when it comes to matters of war and peace in the world, it is very much the great powers that call the shots. Increased intra-great-power brinkmanship has clear implications for the security policy of states and alliances. This clear tendency, however, should be balanced against the robust trend of the 'long peace' highlighted in last year's Monitor. A dispassionate, impartial and evidence-based assessment is required to strike the right balance. In the HCSS Strategic Monitor process, we continuously strive to contribute to that balance.

Pivot States. Third, we have examined the role of so-called pivot states and their security implications. In last year's Monitor we concluded that in a multipolar system pivot states gain in importance A state moving from one great power's sphere of influence into another can be extremely destabilizing, with a great risk of escalation. Here too, events in and around Ukraine in early 2014 provide a sobering illustration of this trend. Shifts in the position of pivot states harness plenty of perils *and* promises which, if understood well, can be usefully leveraged by policymakers. It seems to us – and it would be interesting to further pursue this hypothesis – that the combination of the renewed rivalry between great powers with a more active roles of pivot states – from passive (the proverbial pawn in the great powers' game) to active (acting as a provoker or as a mediator between great powers for example) to anything in between – is likely to have a critical impact on geopolitical realities for some time to come.

Destabilization in the periphery of Europe. Fourth, in the HCSS Strategic Monitor 2013 we foresaw that the long term positive trend of declining instability, violence and conflicts was countered by an ever more volatile security environment, leading to a broad range of risks and threats. The number and intensity of inter- and intrastate conflict has dropped dramatically since the end of the Cold War, but with a slight upward movement in 2012. This development was closely related to the increase in conflicts on the fringes of Europe – North Africa and the Middle East in particular. This is disconcerting for The Netherlands and/in Europe, because destabilization and conflict in the MENA region directly affects our own security and prosperity. This year's elaboration of the prospects for stability in the MENA region paints a picture of

a region that is likely to remain in turmoil for quite some years to come, with many drivers pointing towards a continuation or even a deterioration of the current unstable and conflict-rich situation, rather than an overall movement towards greater stability and conflict resolution.

Bottom line. HCSS's contributions to the 2014 Strategic Monitor were – contrary to our efforts in 2011 and 2012 –not intended to represent a full 'scan' of the security environment. In close consultation with the Dutch government, four discrete topics that had emerged from last year's Monitor were flagged as particularly worrisome and therefore deserving of further investigation. This report presents the main findings from these four separate sub-studies. HCSS continues to believe that our security and defense organizations require a better, more balanced, and more evidence-based strategic anticipation capability that looks at positive and negative trends, at risks and opportunities. Many of the methods and tools used in this year's sub-studies were developed with precisely that broader aim in mind.

Despite this year's clear selection bias in favor of particularly 'dangerous' developments, these sub-studies clearly point to some worrisome dynamics in the global and regional security environment. We highlight the growing assertiveness in great power behavior (also military), various escalation risks at the seams of the international system where spheres of influence overlap, and a substantial chance for a prolonged period of instability and conflict in the MENA-region. Every single one of these poses formidable – and to a large extent new – challenges to Western policy-makers in its own right. Taken together, they signal an urgent need for a more creative approach to defense and security policy.

ENDNOTES

ENDNOTES

1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1 Interdepartementale projectgroep "Verkenningen," *Eindrapport Verkenningen. Houvast voor de krijgsmacht van de toekomst*, (Den Haag, 2010)

2 Stephan De Spiegeleire et al., *STRONG in the 21st Century. Strategic Orientation and Navigation under Deep Uncertainty* (The Hague: The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, 2010).

3 Tim Sweijs et al., *Lichten in de Duisternis: Zeven Perspectieven Op de Toekomstige Veiligheidsomgeving [Complexity and Defense Foresight. A Multi-Perspective Approach to Strategic Orientation]*, HCSS Report for the Netherlands Defence Organization (The Hague: The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (HCSS), 2012).

4 Frank Bekkers et al., *De Toekomst in Alle Staten. HCSS Strategic Monitor 2013. [The Future in All Its States]*, vol. 20, HCSS Report (The Hague: HCSS, 2013).

2 ASSESSING ASSERTIONS OF ASSERTIVENESS: THE CHINESE AND RUSSIAN CASES

1 The English word 'Brink' (also known in Danish and Dutch) derives from the Proto-Indoeuropean root *bhren-, meaning "project, edge".

2 We point out that we did go to some lengths to unearth both evidence of negative and positive/neutral assertiveness, but that we did not look for 'dogs that didn't bark'.

3 Jack S. Levy, "Great Power Wars, 1495-1815" (Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) [distributor], May 20, 1994).

4 Anders Fogh Rasmussen, "Nato and Russia – Time to Engage" (presented at the Munich Security Conference, Munich, February 1, 2014), https://www.securityconference.de/fileadmin/MSC_/2014/Reden/2014-02-01_Speech_Nato_GS_Rasmussen_MSC.pdf.

5 For a – hawkish – overview, see Dean Cheng, *Meeting the Challenge of Chinese Expansionism on the East Asian Littoral*, Issue Brief on Asia and the Pacific (Washington, D.C: Heritage Foundation, January 24, 2014), http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2014/01/the-challenge-of-china-s-expansionism-in-east-asia-and-us-policy-responses.

6 Whereas there are different definitions of the term 'great power', they are typically based on an 'objective' component (their 'capabilities' – defined and measured differently by different authors) and a subjective one. We will use, for historical purposes, the list presented in Jack Levy, *War in the Modern Great Power System, 1495-1975* (Lexington Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1983). (E.g. the Netherlands is in his list a great power from 1609 through 1713). We also want to point out that the literature remains biased in terms of 1) size: small powers have not received nearly the same degree of scholarly attention as their greater peers; 2) geographic location: there remains a sizeable Euro-centric bias and 3) historical timeframe: with far more focus on the 'modern' age at the expense of the preceding few millennia of evidence.

7 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Yearbook 2013: Armaments, Disarmaments and International Security*, 2013.

8 A Gini-coefficient of 0 would mean that all states spend exactly the same on defense (perfect equality); a Gini coefficient of 1 would mean one state spends the entire global military expenditure (total inequality). The military Gini coefficient went down from almost .9 in 1989 to .86 towards the end of the previous decade, but then went up again to .89 in 2010. Since then, it has declined a little to .88.

9 This includes the figures for the USSR and then for the Russian Federation.

10 For this calculation, the data for the EU anachronistically represent the military expenditures of all current EU member states.

11 Since we only wanted to illustrate the broad trends in relative military expenditures across some key players over time, the Russia dataset includes available data for the Soviet Union, and the EU figures include data for all current 28 EU member states, even for the period when they were not yet members of the EU.

12 The dip in 1991 is a statistical artefact, because no figures were made available for that year.

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38 In its current incarnation, GDELT, because of copyright issues, does not allow the analyst to drill down to the actual articles that were coded in a certain way. That is to say, GDELT does indicate the nature of the event (e.g., an express intent to meet or negotiate), but not the precise details of that event. Because of this, HCSS was unable to identify the actual events that were coded in a certain way. Where possible, we did try to identify those events based on contextual searches in Google and some sources like *the Economist* or *the New York Times*.

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41 This can be made available upon request.

42 Since all searches were stemmed, this N-gram therefore also included other variants such as "China asserts", China asserted", "China asserting", etc.

43 These three main key words all peak in 2011, may be due to two reasons: (1) a policy shift as a response to the US 'pivot' strategy towards Asia under the Obama administration, to regain some importance as a key player in international cooperation; (2) China also suffered from a slowdown in its own economy during the crisis, thus reinforced its engagement for economic cooperation in foreign relations.

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119 In the case of GDELT, these figures represent changes over the period 2003-2013 from a certain baseline. For instance, the 2003 base level for Russia remains significantly higher than the one for China. But red here indicates that the increase from that baseline has been much more pronounced in the China than in the Russia case.

120 Graham T Allison, *Essence of Decision; Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971). See also more recent scholarship on this such as David R. Gibson, *Talk at the Brink: Deliberation and Decision During the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Princeton University Press, 2012); Richard Feinberg, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis: Castro, Mikoyan, Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Missiles of November* (COUNCIL FOREIGN RELAT IONS INC HAROLD PRATT HOUSE, 58 E 68TH ST, NEW YORK, NY 10065 USA, 2013); ibid.; James A. Nathan, "The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited: Why It Matters Who Blinked," *Foreign Affairs* 91, no. 6 (December 2012): 163–66; Graham Allison, "The Cuban Missile Crisis at 50," *Foreign Affairs* 91, no. 4 (August 7, 2012): 11–16; Arthur I. Cyr, "The Cuban Missile Crisis after Fifty Years," *Orbis* 57, no. 1 (2013): 5–19.

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3 WHY ARE PIVOT STATES SO PIVOTAL? THE ROLE OF PIVOT STATES IN REGIONAL AND GLOBAL SECURITY

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5 Daniel S Geller and J. David Singer, *Nations at War: A Scientific Study of International Conflict*, vol. 58 (Cambridge; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 119.

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7 See Daniel S. Geller and David J. Singer, *Nations at War: A Scientific Study of International Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 119.: 'If the capability advantage of the leading state is small or is eroding, other states may choose to attempt to alter the hierarchy. The challenges may be directed against the leading state or lesser states within an increasingly unstable international order. (…) As the international system moves from a high concentration of resources in the leading state toward multipolarity (power diffusion), lower-order conflict among the set of major states will become increasingly probable, due to the weakening of the principal defender of the hierarchy.(..) This suggests that the erosion of the system-level power structure links lower-order wars among major powers to system shaping global wars.'

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16 Cohen, *Global Geopolitical Change in the Post-Cold War Era*, 564.

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18 Cohen, *Global Geopolitical Change in the Post-Cold War Era*, 572.

19 Ibid. : "politically motivated to take the lead in pan-regional activities… Much of a second-order state's strength as a political innovator lies in its ability to export innovations to other second-order powers (and to import others in return)... Second-order powers continually strive for economic, political and military independence from first-order states. While these goals are not fully attainable, independence in one sphere (e.g. technological or economic) may act as a counterweight to dependence in another sphere (e.g. military). Saul B. Cohen, "A New Map of Global Geopolitical Equilibrium: A Developmental Approach," *Political Geography Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (1982): 231.

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21 Cohen, *Global Geopolitical Change in the Post-Cold War Era*, 564.

22 Ian Bremmer, *Every Nation for Itself: Winners and Losers in a G-Zero World* (New York: Portfolio/Penguin, 2012).

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24 Jack S Levy, *War in the Modern Great Power System, 1495-1975* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1983), 10–19.

25 Vesna Danilovic, *When the Stakes Are High Deterrence and Conflict among Major Powers* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 104, http://site.ebrary.com/id/10395596.

26 Some strategic goods are present in all states too some extent. In the cases of military expenditures, foreign direct investment (also as % of GDP) and Resource Rents (also as % of GDP), we scored that a state possessed a strategic good if they ranked in the top 10% of all states.

27 Quoted in Parliament, *Hansard Fourth Series* (29-30 Bouverie Street, London: Parliamentary Debates), 1582–83, http://www.hansard-archive.parliament.uk/.

28 See Office of the White House Press Secretary, "Remarks by President Barack Obama at Suntory Hall | The White House," November 14, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-barack-obama-suntory-hall.

29 Michael Fullilove, "Obama Shows Commitment to Asia," *The Brookings Institution*, accessed March 19, 2014, http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2009/11/20-obama-asia-fullilove.

30 See Paul Gordon Lauren, Gordon Alexander Craig, and Alexander L. George, *Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Challenges of Our Time* (Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2013).

31 In Maoz, these three structural factors make up a measure for strategic affinity between a great power and a pivot state. See Zeev Maoz et al., "Structural Equivalence and International Conflict: A Social Networks Analysis," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50, no. 5 (2006): 1–26. Brian Lai and Dan Reiter, "Democracy, Political Similarity, and International Alliances, 1816-1992," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44, no. 2 (2000): 203–27.

32 See the extensive literature on the democratic peace theory, e.g. Doyle, Michael W. "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs". *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12 (Vol. 12, Nos. 3 and 4, 1983); Levy, Jack S., "Domestic politics and war". *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (Journal of Interdisciplinary History, Vol. 18, No. 4, 1988; Russett, Bruce &; Oneal, John R. *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001)

33 Paul Hensel and Sara McLauglin Mitchell, "The Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) Project," accessed October 22, 2013, http://www.paulhensel.org/icow.html; Douglas Gibler and Meredith R. Sarkees, "Measuring Alliances: The Correlates of War Formal Interstate Alliance Dataset, 1816-2000," *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 2 (2004): 211–22; Mark S Copelovitch and Jon C. W. Pevehouse, "Ties That Bind? Preferential Trade Agreements and Exchange Rate Policy Choice," *International Studies Quarterly* 57 (n.d.): 385–99; Monty G. Marshall and Ted Robert Gurr, "Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2012" (Centre for Systemic Peace, n.d.), http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm; CIA, *The World Factbook*, accessed December 11, 2013, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/.

34 'Ties that bind' associations between great powers and states with strategic goods were calculated as the sum total of the association score in each of the three main dimensions (military, economic and ideational) - which where all scored using a 0-1 scale (see table), with a total (possible) aggregate score falling between 0 and 3.

35 States with strategic goods were plotted on the X-axis by subtracting their association score with the EU from their association score with China, and on the Y-axis by subtracting the association score with Russia from their association score with the U.S.

36 The country-codes employed are in ISO-3166-1 alpha-3 (based on the ISO 3166 Maintenance Agency), and are as follows: "SAU" = Saudi Arabia; "IND" = India; "IRQ" = Iraq; "IRN" = Iran; "EGY" = Egypt; "TUR" = Turkey; "ISR" = Israel; "KAZ" =

Kazakhstan; "MMR" = Myanmar; "UZB" = Uzbekistan; "SYR" = Syria; "BRA" = Brazil; "CAN" = Canada; "GEO" = Georgia; "JSPN" = Japan; "SGP" = Singapore; "KWT" = Kuwait; "OMN" = Oman; "TKM" = Turkmenistan; "MNG" = Mongolia; "VEN" = Venezuela; "ARE" = United Arab Emirates; "MYS" = Malaysia; "IDN" = Indonesia; "AUS" = Australia; "MEX" = Mexico; "UKR" = Ukraine; "CUB" = Cuba; "PAK" = Pakistan; "THA" = Thailand; "AFG" = Afghanistan; "DJI" = Djibouti; "KOR" = Korea, Republic of.

37 See endnote 36.

38 See endnote 36.

39 Anocracies are "are countries whose governments are neither fully democratic nor fully autocratic but, rather, combine an, often, incoherent mix of democratic and autocratic traits and practices." Monty G. Marshall and Benjamin R. Cole, *Global Report 2011: Conflict, Governance, and State Fragility* (Vienna, VA: Center for Szstemic Peace, 2011), 9.

40 Most likely, this development has to do with the fact that on average, more pivot states have become democratic in the period between 1980 and 2012, meaning that they were more inclined to move towards the West rather than towards China—or Russia, for that matter.

41 Relationships that flow associations between great powers and states with strategic goods were calculated as a sum total of the association score in each of the three main dimensions (military, economic and ideational). For relationships that flow, each association of a pivot state with a great power with was scored on a scale from 0-100 based on their for each dimension, which was normalized through the formula (interdependency score / 3) * 100. In each of the three dimensions the relationships that flow figures were transformed to a 0-1 scale, with the total (possible) aggregate score falling between 0 and 3.

42 States with strategic goods were plotted on the X-axis by subtracting their association score with the EU from their association score with China, and on the Y-axis by subtracting the association score with Russia from their association score with the U.S.

43 SIPRI, Sipri Arms Transfers Database Trade Register (Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2013), http://portal.sipri.org/publications/pages/transfer/trade-register; United Nations, UN COMTRADE Database. http://comtrade.un.org/; Kalev Leetaru, Philip Schrodt, and Patrick Brandt, Global Database of Events, Language, and Tone (GDELT) (Dallas: University of Dallas), accessed December 11, 2013, gdelt.utdallas.edu, presently available at gdeltproject.org

44 The 'degree of association' for a given great power and all states with strategic goods in a given year is calculated by taking the average 'relationships that flow' score for that great power with all states with strategic goods in that year.

45 The country-codes employed are in ISO-3166-1 alpha-3 (based on the ISO 3166 Maintenance Agency), and are as follows: "SAU" = Saudi Arabia; "IND" = India; "IRQ" = Iraq; "IRN" = Iran; "EGY" = Egypt; "TUR" = Turkey; "ISR" = Israel; "KAZ" = Kazakhstan; "MMR" = Myanmar; "UZB" = Uzbekistan; "SYR" = Syria; "BRA" = Brazil; "CAN" = Canada; "GEO" = Georgia; "JPN" = Japan; "SGP" = Singapore; "KWT" = Kuwait; "OMN" = Oman; "TKM" = Turkmenistan; "MNG" = Mongolia; "VEN" = Venezuela; "ARE" = United Arab Emirates; "MYS" = Malaysia; "IDN" = Indonesia; "AUS" = Australia; "MEX" = Mexico; "UKR" = Ukraine; "CUB" = Cuba; "PAK" = Pakistan; "THA" = Thailand; "AFG" = Afghanistan; "DJI" = Djibouti; "KOR" = Korea, Republic of.

46 See endnote 45

47 See endnote 45.

48 See e.g. Edward Wong and Nicola Clark, "China's Arms Industry Makes Global Inroads," *The New York Times*, October 20, 2013, sec. World / Asia Pacific, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/21/world/asia/chinas-arms-industry-makes-global-inroads.html.; Julia Famularo, "Erdogan Visits Xinjiang," *The Diplomat*, April 14, 2012, http://thediplomat.com/2012/04/erdogan-visits-xinjiang/.

49 The precise origin of the quote are contested, but it is frequently attributed to Henry Kissinger. See for instance Alasdair Drysdale and Raymond Hinnebusch, *Syria and the Middle East Peace Process* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1991), 2.

50 See e.g. Kenneth Katzman, *The United Arab Emirates: Issues for US Policy* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, October 17, 2013), http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=100294.

51 See e.g. Mariya Gordeyeva, "UPDATE 4-China Buys into Giant Kazakh Oilfield for $5 Bln," *Reuters*, September 7, 2013, http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/07/oil-kashagan-china-idUSL5N0H302E20130907.

52 Raushan Nurshayeva, "Kazakhs Launch 'Silk Road' China-Europe Rail Route," June 10, 2013, http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/10/us-kazakhstan-railway-idUSBRE9590GH20130610.

53 See e.g. Richard A. Bitzinger, "China as a Major Arms Exporter: Implications for Southeast Asia « ISN Blog," *ISN Blog*, November 11, 2013, http://isnblog.ethz.ch/security/china-as-a-major-arms-exporter-implications-for-southeast-asia.

54 See Jackie Calmes, "A U.S. Marine Base for Australia Irritates China," *The New York Times*, November 16, 2011, sec. World / Asia Pacific, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/17/world/asia/obama-and-gillard-expand-us-australia-military-ties.html.

4 STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS: BEYOND THE DICHOTOMY

1 F.F Bekkers and Den Haag Centrum voor Strategische Studies, *De toekomst in alle staten: HCSS strategische monitor 2013* (The Hague: The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, 2013).

2 Non-governmental organizations are widely regarded to be part of civil society in all its variety. This means that not all civil society actors are NGOs. Academia, sports clubs, churches, political parties and trade unions, to name a few, are also considered part of civil society. As we approach the issue from a (international) security perspective we focus on cooperative Non-State Actors that play a role in civil society by promoting or enhancing human security, one of the main functions of state actors. Such Non-State Actors are regarded as NGOs.

3 Reflected in what is called the realist school. See, most prominently, Hans J Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1948); Raymond Aron, *Peace and War; a Theory of International Relations*. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966); Kenneth N Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1979).

4 Key examples are Robert O Keohane and Joseph S Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977); Manuel Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996); Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

5 See, for example, Martin van Creveld, *The Rise and Decline of the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

6 Indeed, according to the traditional Weberian definition, a state is "a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory." See Max Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965).

7 According to the latest government budget for 2014, spending on defense amounts to EUR 7,2bn, while health and social security expenditures amount to 77,8bn and 78,6bn respectively.

8 Of course, the Westphalian state is only an ideal model, and is being challenged from two directions. One is in the post-modern European sphere, where ever more state functions are being subsumed by the EU, while in other parts of the world, the Westphalian state model is being unravelled (and put back together again) in countries that lack control over their own territories, the most telling examples including Somalia, Yemen and the DR Congo.

9 This trend that has somewhat reversed during the last couple of years, as noted in last year's HCSS Strategic Monitor

10 We adhere to Max Weber's definition of the state as the source of legitimate physical force, referring to police and armed forces but also to private security forces, as long and in so far they have legitimacy derived from the state. „Man kann vielmehr den modernen Staat soziologisch letztlich nur definieren aus einem spezifischen *Mittel,* das ihm, wie jedem politischen Verband, eignet: der physischen Gewaltsamkeit". See Johannes Winckelmann (ed.), "Politik als Beruf," in Max Weber and Johannes Winckelmann, *Gesammelte politische Schriften*, 5th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1988); Max Weber,

Gesammelte politische schriften,, 1st ed. (München: Drei masken Verlag, 1921).

11 According to one definition, it "comprises actors which apparently have only in common that they are not the state, not the government." Elsewhere, a well-known political scientist even declared that Non-State Actors are an "empty term" and that it is impossible to theorize about them. See Anne Peters, Lucy Koechlin, and Gretta Fenner Zinkernagel, "Non-State Actors as Standard Setters: Framing the Issue in an Interdisciplinary Fashion," in Anne Peters et al., eds., *Non-State Actors as Standard Setters* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 14.; Thomas Risse, "Transnational Actors and World Politics," in Walther Ch Zimmerli, Klaus Richter, and Markus Holzinger, *Corporate Ethics and Corporate Governance* (Berlin; New York: Springer, 2007), 251.

12 According to the 1933 Montevideo conference, these include 1) a permanent population, 2) a defined territory, 3) a government and 4) the capacity to enter into relations with other states. Often, and tellingly, the criterion of effective control over its territory (i.e. having a monopoly on the use of force) is added to these criteria.

13 See, e.g. discussed in James Stavridis and Evelyn N. Farkas, "The 21st Century Force Multiplier: Public–Private Collaboration," *The Washington Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (2012): 7–20.

14 Gustaaf Geeraerts, "Analyzing Non-State Actors in World Politics," *Pole Paper Series* 1, no. 4 (1995), available at <http://poli.vub.ac.be/publi/pole-papers/pole0104.htm>

15 For instance, while the multipolar and multilateral scenarios are considered state-centric, Non-State Actors are also deemed to play a role here. The reverse is the case for the fragmentation and network scenarios. See Ministerie van Defensie, *Eindrapport Verkenningen*, 2010, 127, available from http://www.fsw.vu.nl/nl/Images/Eindrapport%20Verkenningen_tcm30-168292.pdf.

16 For example, cooperative action between aggressive Non-State Actors is much less desirable than, say fragmentation between NGOs that promote human rights. Hence, a framework that focuses on the nature of the objectives of state and Non-State Actors would paint a much more useful picture about the impact of Non-State Actors on international security than the scenario framework does.

17 The four scenarios described in the framework are archetypical, and not deemed to be mutually exclusive in reality. As the authors write, "aspects of the different scenarios are likely to manifest themselves simultaneously in different parts of the world to different extents." What is more, these scenarios are neither meant to be predictive, nor offering a menu of choice. Ministerie van Defensie, *Eindrapport Verkenningen*, 128.

18 This is because 1) the spread of means of communication and increasing globalization of economic ties and normative standards makes and 2) The Netherlands operates in a post-modern zone in which operating in networks is rapidly becoming the dominant mode of operation for international business and diplomacy, and thus the most appropriate starting point from which to consider the increasing and changing role of Non-State Actors.

19 The report notes, in Dutch: "De scenario's Netwerk en Fragmentatie hangen nauw samen met de opkomst van niet-statelijke actoren. Ze trekken deze ontwikkeling door, al blijven staten in deze scenario's aanwezig. In deze scenario's komen begrippen als nationale soevereiniteit, het geweldsmonopolie van de staat en de internationale rechtsorde in een nieuw en dikwijls nog onbekend daglicht te staan. Deze scenario's zijn wellicht minder herkenbaar, maar daardoor niet minder plausibel of minder relevant. In het bijzonder deze twee scenario's brengen de breuklijnen in kaart die zijn ontstaan in reactie op de in de afgelopen twee decennia versnelde mondialisering. In Netwerk zet het proces van mondialisering in hoog tempo door, zij het dat een deel van de wereldbevolking daarin nog altijd niet kan meekomen. In Fragmentatie hebben de tegenkrachten van mondialisering de overhand gekregen en staat het behoud van een eigen identiteit en de bescherming van de eigen welvaart en veiligheid voorop. See Ministerie van Defensie, *Eindrapport Verkenningen*, 127–128.

20 Examples offered include that "Businesses provide jobs, spur economic growth, and can work with government and civil society to solve shared challenges. Civil society, universities, and humanitarian organizations can often act in areas or in a manner that a government simply cannot: as neutrals or aid providers in conflict zones; as thought-leaders; and as intermediaries between states or between states and peoples." See U.S. Department of State, *Quadrennial Diplomacy*

and Development Review (Washington, D.C.: U.S. State Dept.,2010), 14. A similar point was made in the 2010 *US National Security Strategy*, in which it was said that "There must be opportunities for individuals and the private sector to play a major role in addressing common challenges - whether supporting a nuclear fuel bank, promoting global health, fostering entrepreneurship, or exposing violations of universal rights. In the 21st century, the ability of individuals and nongovernmental actors to play a positive role in shaping the international environment represents a distinct opportunity for the United States.", White House, "National Security Strategy," 2010, 13.

21 See interim report, Advisory Commission on Modernising Diplomacy, "Modernisering van de diplomatie," 2013, 14. "Gelijktijdig is een "netwerk-wereld" opgekomen met een explosieve toename van en sterke verwevenheid van statelijke en niet-statelijke actoren, van onderwerpen en kanalen waarlangs wordt samengewerkt. Dat gebeurt steeds vaker in informele netwerken, en op een wisselende schaal."

22 "Diplomaten leveren meerwaarde door het verbinden van de interstatelijke wereld en de niet-statelijke netwerksamenleving." See "Voor Nederland, wereldwijd", Letter of the Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs to Parliament, Doc. kst 32734-15, p. 18

23 "Most of the Global South is located in South and Central America, Africa, and Asia. An earlier classification system looked at the world as being made up of three worlds of development." From: Harold Damerow, "Global North and Global South Definitions. International Politics, GOV 207" (Union County College, 2010), available at http://faculty.ucc.edu/egh-damerow/global_south.htm.

24 This point was explicitly acknowledged in the Dutch Ministry of Defence's *Eindrapport Verkenningen*: "Staten staan bloot aan de druk van mondialisering en de daarmee samenhangende opkomst van een activistische, transnationale civil society die de staat als overheersende bron van identiteit en forum voor politieke mobilisatie naar de kroon steekt. De politieke legitimiteit van staten wordt steeds meer afgemeten aan hun vermogen om hun samenlevingen 'mondialiseringsbestendig' te maken, bijvoorbeeld door de economische concurrentiekracht te versterken, de nadelige gevolgen van mondialisering buiten de deur te houden of wereldwijd de veiligheid van onderdanen, bedrijven en bezittingen te kunnen waarborgen. Het soevereiniteitsbeginsel komt hierdoor in een ander daglicht te staan. Ministerie van Defensie, *Eindrapport Verkenningen*, 105.

25 Jovan Kurbalija and Valentin Katrandjiev, *Multistakeholder Diplomacy Challenges and Opportunities* (Malta; Geneva: DiploFoundation, 2006), 86.

26 But while technology such as Facebook, Twitter, and other social media can help topple governments, it cannot provide a coherent and organized replacement pole of bureaucratic power to maintain political stability afterwards. One observer concluded that "[t]his is how technology encourages anarchy." See Robert Kaplan, "Why So Much Anarchy?", *Stratfor Global Affairs*, February 5, 2014, available at <http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/why-so-much-anarchy>

27 Among the potential causes of the Rights revolution, Pinker includes democracy and the development of technology and communication. See discussed in Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), 475-81

28 Oft-mentioned examples include natural disasters (Tsunami 2004, Haiti 2010, Philippines 2013), humanitarian tragedies (Darfur 2004, Syria 2012-13), armed conflict (campaigns for intervention in Kosovo and Libya) or injustice (campaigns to bring Uganda's Joseph Kony to justice, or the Coalition for the Creation of the ICC). However, such action is not only limited to Western audiences: civil society driven anti-corruption campaigns in India, Muslim support for brethren in Palestine, and many of the Arab revolts were driven by feelings of injustice and an urge to assert basic rights.

29 See discussed in e.g. Stephen Wheatley, *Democratic governance beyond the state: the legitimacy of Non-State Actors as standard setters*, 215-41, in Peters et al., *Non-State Actors as Standard Setters*.

30 James McGann and Mary Johnstone, "The Power Shift and the NGO Credibility Crisis", *International Journal for Non-Profit Law*, Vol. 8, no 2 (2005).

31 Ibid.

32 For instance, the journalist Robert Kaplan argued in 2000 that "companies are like the feudal domains that evolved into nation-states; they are nothing less than the vanguard of a new Darwinian organization of politics." See Robert D Kaplan,

The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War (New York: Random House, 2000), 81. The American sociologist Benjamin Barber recently posited that megacities could become the new loci of civic organization, in particular in the developing world. See Benjamin Barber, *If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

33 See e.g. Ministerie van Defensie, *Eindrapport Verkenningen*, 105.: "Ook op veiligheidspolitiek gebied, traditioneel het domein van statelijk handelen, hebben niet-statelijke actoren hun intrede gedaan. Deze actoren manifesteren zich op elke positie in de veiligheidsketen; van het signaleren van risico's en dreigingen tot en met interventie en het toezien op vredesregelingen. Mondialisering en de opkomst van nieuwe niet-statelijke actoren leiden tot een spreiding van de macht en een internationaal systeem dat moeilijker is te controleren en te besturen. In een dergelijk systeem wordt de macht in het wereldsysteem niet langer gedomineerd door louter staten, maar in toenemende mate ook door niet-statelijke actoren. Deze wereld met vele spelers die weinig gecoördineerd opereren, wordt in veel analyses als een trend gezien die op zich wereldwijde samenwerking niet uitsluit, maar juist door zijn onoverzichtelijkheid kan leiden tot verdere onvoorspelbaarheid, instabiliteit en wellicht zelfs chaos."

34 Ben Knapen et.al., *Attached to the World: On the Anchoring and Strategy of Dutch Foreign Policy* (The Hague: Scientific Council for Government Policy, 2010), 7

35 Ibid. 19

36 Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 420

37 See discussed in e.g. Louise I. Shelley and John T. Picarelli, "Methods Not Motives: Implications Of The Convergence Of International Organized Crime And Terrorism," *Police Practice and Research: An International Journal,* Vol. 3, no. 4 (2002), 305–318.

38 See UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, available at UNODC at <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/treaties/CTOC/>

39 Ben Knapen et.al., *Attached to the World: On the Anchoring and Strategy of Dutch Foreign Policy* (The Hague: Scientific Council for Government Policy, 2010), 104

40 U.S. Department of State, *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review*, 63.

41 Joseph Nye wrote that "A rough way to gauge the increasing importance of transnational organizations is to count how many times these organizations are mentioned in mainstream media publications. The use of the term "non-governmental organization" or "NGO" has increased 17-fold since 1992." See Joseph Nye, "The Rising Power of NGOs" Project Syndicate, June 24, 2004 .

42 The Rand corporation developed a rough measure taking into account such individual dimensions: "State power can be conceived at three levels: (1) resources or capabilities, or power-in-being; (2) how that power is converted through national processes; (3) and power in outcomes, or which state prevails in particular circumstances." See Gregory F Treverton et al., eds., *Measuring National Power* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2005), Ix.

43 As Davies wrote, ""Although INGO numbers and the apparent impact of transnational civil society are the two principal means of gauging transnational civil society cited in the existing literature, both measures may be misleading. For instance, an expansion in the number of international non-governmental organizations may represent fragmentation of transnational civil society into smaller INGOs rather than growth." See Thomas Davies, *The Rise and Fall of Transnational Civil Society: The Evolution of International Non-Governmental Organisations since 1839* (Department of International Politics, City University London, 2008), 4.

44 Stavridis and Farkas, "The 21st Century Force Multiplier."

45 See Pierre-Emmanuel Ly, "The Charitable Activities of Terrorist Organizations", *Public Choice*, Vol. 131 (April 2007), 178

46 Military security & protection teams of up to 20 armed marines deployed on board of the most vulnerable merchant ships passing through the Gulf of Aden and the Somali Basin of the Indian Ocean. See: Ministerie van Defensie, "Eindevaluatie Inzet Vessel Protection Detachment (VPD1 en 2)," June 10, 2011.

47 See Lester M. Salamon, "The Rise of the Non-Profit Sector", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73 (1994), 109-22

48 Ibid

49 Quoted from speech to UNECE (undated) in Sabine Lang, *NGOs, Civil Society and the Public Sphere* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1

50 See art. 71, UN Charter

51 Quoted in "The Future Role of Civil Society", Geneva: *World Economic Forum* (2013), 8. Strictly speaking, the World Bank referred here to civil society organizations, which comprise NGOs and not-for-profit organizations. Other definitions include that of Lang: "[o]n the most basic level, NGOs (1) are not related to government, (2) are not for profit, (3) are voluntary, and (4) pursue activities for the common good instead of just for their members." See Sabine Lang, *NGOs, Civil Society and the Public Sphere* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 12; and Peters et.al: NGOs are "bodies that are non-governmental in the sense that they are not established by governments. They are – at least formally- free from government interference, and do not wield governmental powers." See Peters, Koechlin, and Zinkernagel, "Non-State Actors as Standard Setters: Framing the Issue in an Interdisciplinary Fashion," 15-16

52 Paul Dekker, *De Oplossing van de Civil Society* (inaugural address, Tilburg, June 28, 2002), available athttp://www.scp.nl/dsresource?objectid=21084&type=org.

53 Ibid., 17 "Is men hier in redelijke discussie uit, dan meldt zich steevast iemand die wil weten hoe het is met de Ku Klux Klan en de maffia. Ik zou zeggen de Ku Klux Klan helaas wel en de maffia gelukkig niet…".

54 William F. Fisher, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 26 (1997), 452

55 Figures derived from UN ECOSOC 2009 and the UIA Yearbook of International Organizations 2005-06.

56 Figures were quoted from an article in *World Watch*, the magazine of the World Watch Institute. See "The Non Governmental Order" *The Economist*, December 9, 1999

57 Figures derived from Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-Profit Project 2000, quoted in Sabine Lang, *NGOs, Civil Society and the Public Sphere* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 13

58 "The Non Governmental Order" *The Economist*, December 9, 1999. Mazower wrote on this point that "[m]any NGOs are now entrenched and institutionalized in UN agencies and elsewhere (...) and by 2003 they were disbursing more money than most UN agencies or indeed member states." Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 417

59 See e.g. Edward Turner, "Why Has the Number of International Non-Governmental Organizations Exploded since 1960?" *Cliodynamics* 1, 81-91; Sabine Lang, *NGOs, Civil Society and the Public Sphere* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 14

60 As Reimann noted "According to the new pro-NGO norm, in order to be a properly functioning free market and democratic nation in the 1990s and 2000s, it was now necessary to have a flourishing "civil society" sector that included NGOs and other citizen-organized groups." See Kim Reimann, "A View from the Top: International Politics, Norms, and the Worldwide Growth of NGOs" *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 50 (2006), 59

61 – "Privatising Peace", "*The Economist,* June 30, 2011. In general, the article asserted that "The United Nations, still widely seen as the go-to organization for peacemaking, is hobbled in what it can do by competing political agendas, while America's appetite for elbow-twisting diplomacy has waned. Smaller countries that have specialized in mediation, such as the Scandinavians and Switzerland, have become more risk-averse about engaging with armed groups. The result is that certain types of diplomacy are becoming privatized. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), some with roots in aid-giving and disaster relief are playing an ever greater role in conflict resolution."Geeraerts, "Analyzing Non-State Actors in World Politics."

62 Kofi Annan, Interventions: A Life in War and Peace (London: Allen Lane, 2012), 216

63 AIV, *Interaction Between Actors in International Cooperation: Towards Flexibility and Trust. No. 82* (The Hague: Advisory Council on International Affairs, February 2013), 26.

64 Sabine Lang, *NGOs, Civil Society and the Public Sphere* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 26

65 Ibid. 2

66 Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 418. The example mentioned by Mazower is the Gates Foundation and its approach to tacking global heath issues such as Malaria. Within the donor community, there is now increasing awareness about the possible deleterious effects of outside intervention, framed as the 'do no harm' principle. See e.g. OECD, *Do No Harm: International Support for Statebuilding*. (Paris: OECD, 2010).

67 Redactie NRC, "Greenpeace-Activiste Vraagt Koning Om Hulp," *NRC Handelsblad*, November 1, 2013, n we NRC.nl edition, zie ook: Redactie Volkskrant, "Nederland Naar Zeetribunaal, Rusland Ontbreekt," *De Volkskrant*, November 6, 2013, Volkskrant.nl edition.

68 Ministerie van Defensie, "Defensie Vliegt Nogmaals Hulpgoederen Naar Filipijnen," November 21, 2013.

69 See discussed in Anthony Bebbington and Roger Riddell, "The Direct Funding of Southern NGOs by Donors: New Agendas and Old Problems" *Journal of International Development*, Vol. 7 (1995), 879-893

70 Marie Juul Petersen, "International Religious NGOs at The United Nations: A Study of a Group of Religious Organizations" *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance* (2010)

71 Ibid.

72 This point was also underlined in the World Bank Report *Voices of the Poor* (2000). Fukuyama once noted that "A number of Western NGOs and foundations, recognizing the importance of social capital and civil society, have sought to foster the latter in a number of developing countries in the 1990s. While it is too early for definitive studies on this subject, anecdotal evidence suggests that it is difficult for outsiders to foster civil society in countries where it has no local roots." Clearly, faith-based NGOs would have an advantage here. See Francis Fukuyama, "Social Capital, Civil Society and Development" *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 22 (2001), 18

73 In Putnam's description, social capital entails "connections among individuals--social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them." Robert D Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 19.

74 "The Future Role of Civil Society", Geneva: *World Economic Forum* (2013), 12

75 See discussed in e.g. David Lewis and Nazneen Kanji, *Non-Governmental Organizations and Development* (London: Routledge, 2009), 196-98

76 See "Analysis: Arab and Muslim aid and the West - "two china elephants" IRIN News, October 19, 2011.

77 Jon Alterman and Karin von Hippel, *Understanding Islamic Charities* (Washington, CSIS, 2007), 2-3

78 See Marie Juul Petersen, "For humanity or for the umma?: ideologies of aid in for transnatinal Muslim NGOs" (Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen, 2011).

79 See discussed in "Analysis: A Faith-based Aid Revolution in the Muslim World?", *IRIN News*, June 1, 2012, available at <http://www.irinnews.org/report/95564/analysis-a-faith-based-aid-revolution-in-the-muslim-world>

80 Listed by UN Security Council 1267 Sanctions Committee. See further discussed in Evan Kohlmann, "The Role of Islamic Charities in International Terrorist recruitment and Financing" *DIIS Working Paper* no 2006/07.

81 As Ferris wrote, "In early 2005, press reports in Indonesia that evangelical groups were trying to bring the Gospel as well as relief to Muslims affected by the tsunami led to questioning and criticism of the work of all Christians." Se also said that "Christian NGOs are active in virtually every country in the world. While Jewish and Islamic NGOs primarily serve members of their own religious communities, Christian organizations tend to have a more global outreach." See Elizabeth Ferris, "Faith-based and Secular Humanitarian Organizations", *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 87 (2005), 323, 317

82 Ibid. 317

83 Abby Stoddard, "Humanitarian NGOs: Challenges and Trends (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2003), 2-3. This point was further underlined by the World Bank, which wrote that "In parallel to this declining confidence in official aid, there has been a progressive "privatization" of aid itself: about a fifth of all reported official and private aid to developing countries has been provided or managed by NGOs and public-private partnerships." See "Aid Architecture: An Overview of

the Main Trends in ODA Flows", Washington: World Bank Group, 2008, 28

84 Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 417

85 "The Non Governmental Order" *The Economist*, December 9, 1999

86 Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 419-20

87 Kim Reimann, "A View from the Top: International Politics, Norms, and the Worldwide Growth of NGOs" *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 50 (2006), 63

88 In the parlance of two German academics, this entails a move from *Herrschaftsmonopolist* towards *Herrschaftsmanager*. See Philipp Genschel and Bernhard Zangl, "Metamorphosen des Staates — vom Herrschaftsmonopolisten zum Herrschaftsmanager," *Leviathan* 36, no. 3 (September 1, 2008), 430–454

89 Anne-Marie Slaughter "Sovereignty and Power in a Networked World Order", *Stanford Journal of International Law*, Vol. 4, (2004), 304

90 Ben Knapen et.al., *Attached to the World: On the Anchoring and Strategy of Dutch Foreign Policy* (The Hague: Scientific Council for Government Policy, 2010), 7

91 The *Advisory Commission on Modernising Diplomacy,* explicitly noted that: "[a] world of networks has emerged characterized by an explosive increase of and strong interwovenness of state and Non-State Actors, as well as themes and channels through which actors cooperate. More frequently, this takes place in informal networks, and to different degrees." Here, the Docters van Leeuwen commission is drawing on an earlier report by the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) which in turn referred to Rosenau's (1999) observation that we are living in a time that is characterised by multiple 'spheres of authority'. Dutch policymakers, thus will increasingly need to operate in different arenas simultaneously in order to secure a single extended Dutch interest, See Ben Knapen et al., *Attached to the World : On the Anchoring and Strategy of Dutch Foreign Policy* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 97.

92 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Voor Nederland, wereldwijd; Samen werken aan toonaangevende diplomatie. - Rapport - Rijksoverheid.nl," rapport, June 28, 2013, 4

93 Knapen et al., *Attached to the World,* 99. Elsewhere Ibid. 104, the report notes that "[i]n a much more strategic way than it is currently doing, the Netherlands should adopt an open, flexible attitude so as to choose those actors that may be of consequence in achieving ambitions, influencing agendas and promoting extended national interests."

94 "Een ministerie dat in essentie denkt en werkt als netwerkorganisatie – open en flexibel; georganiseerd in kringen van wisselende samenstelling, grensoverstijgend gegroepeerd rond regio's en thema's of belangen." *Advisory Commission on Modernising Diplomacy* , 6

95 Ibid., 63

96 Ben Knapen et.al., *Attached to the World: On the Anchoring and Strategy of Dutch Foreign Policy* (The Hague: Scientific Council for Government Policy, 2010), 96-97

97 Ibid, 133

98 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Voor Nederland, wereldwijd; Samen werken aan toonaangevende diplomatie. - Rapport - Rijksoverheid.nl," 7.

5 BALANCING ON THE BRINK: VULNERABILITY OF STATES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

1 Frank Bekkers et al., *De toekomst in alle staten: HCSS strategische monitor 2013* (The Hague: The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, 2013). (Translated from Dutch).

2 In this chapter, MENA refers to the following countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya , Mali, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. We included Mali in the scope of this chapter, because the Dutch government has special interest in the security situation in the country, for example with a view to the spill-over from the Libyan civil war.

3 This echoes last year's HCSS Strategic Monitor, which concluded that "the migration of instability over the past decade

from Afghanistan and Iraq to other vulnerable countries in the Middle East, the Sahel region and the Maghreb, implies that conflict hotspots now extend to the European borders. Instability has moved closer to Europe." See Bekkers et al., *De toekomst in alle staten*, 76.

4 In addition, not all conflict needs to be violent. The consequences of the dynamics which we will discuss here can be set on a continuum, from peaceful protest to full-scale war.

5 See for example Nick Mabey, Sabrina Schulz, and Taylor Dimsdale, "Underpinning the MENA Democratic Transition | E3G," *E3G | Third Generation Environmentalism*, accessed March 26, 2014, http://www.e3g.org/news/media-room/underpinning-the-mena-democratic-transition; And Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, *Investing in Prevention: An International Strategy to Manage Risks of Instability and Improve Crisis Response* (London: Cabinet Office, February 2005), http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/strategy/assets/investing.pdf.

6 Scores are based on the *Conflict Barometer* of *the years 2008 to 2013* from the *Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK).* Conflicts are divided in different intensity levels. Disputes describe a political conflict carried out completely without resorting to violence. A non-violent crisis emerges when one of the actors is *threatened* with violence. Finally, the three "violent conflict scores" (violent crisis, limited war, war) are based on 5 indicators: types of weapons employed (and manner in which they were used); number of military personnel involved; overall casualties; amount of destruction; and amount of refugees. The stacked bars reflect the sum of all conflicts, in which a MENA country participated in a given year. If more than one MENA country was involved in a conflict, each conflict party was taken as an individual unit. For more information and access to the individual reports, visit the HIIK website: http://www.hiik.de/en/konfliktbarometer/index.html. Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, *Conflict Barometer 2013* (Heidelberg, 2014), http://www.hiik.de/en/konfliktbarometer/index.html.

7 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (London: Penguin Books, 1996); Alfred C. Stepan and Graeme B. Robertson, "An' Arab' More Than a' Muslim' Democracy Gap," *Journal of Democracy* 14, no. 3 (2003): 30–44; Alfred C. Stepan and Graeme B. Robertson, "Arab, Not Muslim, Exceptionalism," *Journal of Democracy* 15, no. 4 (2004): 140–46; Larry Diamond, "Why Are There No Arab Democracies?," *Journal of Democracy* 21, no. 1 (2010): 93–112.

8 Vickie Langohr, "Too Much Civil Society, Too Little Politics: Egypt and Liberalizing Arab Regimes," *Comparative Politics* 36, no. 2 (2004): 181–204; Ellen Lust-Okar, *Structuring Conflict in the Arab World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Jason Brownlee, "Portents of Pluralism: How Hybrid Regimes Affect Democratic Transitions," *American Journal of Political Science* 53, no. 3 (2009): 515–32.

9 James T. Quinlivan, "Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East," *International Security* 24, no. 2 (1999): 131–65; Eva Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics* 36, no. 2 (2004): 139–57.

10 Hazem El-Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani, *The Rentier State: Nation, State and Integration in the Arab World*, vol. 2 (London: Routledge Kegan & Paul, 1987).

11 Cecilia Emma Sottilotta, "Political Stability in Autocratic Regimes: Lessons from the Arab Uprisings," *Istituto Affari Internazionali Documents and Working Papers*, IAI Working Papers, 13, no. 1 (2013): 2.

12 Daniel L. Byman, "After the Hope of the Arab Spring, the Chill of an Arab Winter," *The Brookings Institution*, December 4, 2011, http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2011/12/04-arab-spring-byman.

13 Henry Kissinger and Hillary Clinton, Conversations on Diplomacy, interview by Charlie Rose, April 20, 2011, http://www.humanrights.gov/tag/henry-kissinger/.

14 Conflict intensities and information about interstate conflicts are based on Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, *Conflict Barometer 2013* (Heidelberg, 2014), http://www.hiik.de/en/konfliktbarometer/index.html. Information on the location of protests was received from Kalev Leetaru, Philip Schrodt, and Patrick Brandt, *Global Database of Events, Language, and Tone (GDELT)* (Dallas: University of Dallas), accessed December 11, 2013, gdelt.utdallas.edu.

15 Katerina Dalacoura, "The 2011 Uprisings in the Arab Middle East: Political Change and Geopolitical Implications," *International Affairs* 88, no. 1 (2012): 63–79; Frédéric Volpi, "Explaining (and Re-Explaining) Political Change in the Middle East During the Arab Spring: Trajectories of Democratization and of Authoritarianism in the Maghreb," *Democratization* 20, no. 6 (2013): 969–90.

16 Though much of the attention has been given to the role of Facebook and Twitter, the broadcasting of Qatar-based TV-station al-Jazeera is now considered to have been most influential. Manuel Castells, "I Gelsomini Tunisini Viaggiano in Rete," *Internazionale*, February 4, 2011, http://www.internazionale.it/i-gelsomini-tunisini-viaggiano-in-rete/; Habibul Haque Khondker, "Role of the New Media in the Arab Spring," *Globalizations* 8, no. 5 (2011): 675–79.

17 Florence Gaub, *Lessons Learnt. Understanding Instability: Lessons from the 'Arab Spring'* (Swindon: Arts & Humanities Research Council, 2012), http://ahrc.activclient.com/News-and-Events/Publications/Documents/Lessons-Learnt-Terrorism-and-the-Media.pdf.

18 The State Fragility Index (SFI) is one of the most reputable rankings of state instability available, and shows internal and external factors that are associated with domestic conflict. Compared to other indices, the SFI has a relative transparent methodology, which is up to date, and includes scores for all countries in the MENA region. Scores are forward-looking but not predictive: fragile states are more likely to, but will not necessarily, experience future conflict in case of such shocks. Though these and other rankings have been criticized for failing to spot the advent of the Arab Spring, they can help in providing a quick overview of elements of state instability. The SFI ranks states on a scale from 0-25, based on an aggregate of 4 fragility dimensions: economic, security, political, and social. For security, for example, scores reflect how well states manage to secure their territory (effectiveness). States are more fragile if they have a track record of failing security guarantees, as is the case in Iraq, Israel, Turkey and Algeria. On the other hand, the extent of a state's repression is reflected in the security legitimacy score – as the Israeli occupation of Palestinian Territories illustrates. The other three dimensions are defined as follows: (i) *Political*: Effectiveness: does the state manage to sustainably enforce policies? (Regime/Governance Stability 1996-2012); Legitimacy: do citizens have equal access to political power? (Factionalism; Ethnic Group Political Discrimination against more than 5% of Population; Political Salience of Elite Ethnicity; and Polity Fragmentation; Exclusionary Ideology of Ruling Elite). (ii) *Economic:* Effectiveness: Does the state manage to create economic wealth for its citizens? (GDP per capita); and is the government economic policy seen as a legitimate? (manufacturing exports as a percent of merchandise exports). (iii) *Social:* Effectiveness (HDI); Does the state manage to secure the social needs of its people? Legitimacy (infant mortality rate): are social policies seen as legitimate? In addition, the SFI mentions regime type, (recent) war experience and the share of oil exports of a state's GDP. Regime type is not included in the final score, but still highly correlated with fragility. For more information on the SFI, see Monty G. Marshall and Benjamin R. Cole, *State Fragility Index and Matrix 2012* (Vienna, VA: Center for Systemic Peace, 2013), http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/SFImatrix2012c.pdf.

19 All scores are based on Ibid. Note: in the State Fragility Index itself, the indicator scores for the various components (security, political, economic, social) refer to '*-effectiveness'* and '*-legitimacy'*, with higher scores on the components connoting inferior performance. However, since this may sound counterintuitive (e.g. more vulnerable countries scoring highest on 'security effectiveness', etc.), we have chosen to invert the indicators, and speak of *'ineffectiveness'* and '*illegitimacy'*.

20 The relatively good score of Syria in the SFI reflects the rather good score on social issues and political stability. Over the years, the Assad-regime has developed extensive social services, with well functioning schools and hospitals throughout the country. By consequence, child mortality rates are lower in Syria than in all countries ranking higher on the SFI, and HDI scores are better than some countries such as Yemen and Iraq, although still worse than in Algeria and Iran. And the fact that the Assad regime has remained in power for such a long time adds to its score too.

21 Edward D. Mansfield and Jack L. Snyder, *Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007); Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and Civil War," in *Power and Progress: International Politics in Transition*, ed. Jack Snyder (London: Routledge, 2012).

22 "CSP Global Conflict Trends," Center for Systemic Peace, July 3, 2013, fig. 13, http://www.systemicpeace.org/conflict.htm.

23 Factors and dynamics taken from the Polity IV Project, see Monty G. Marshall and Ted Robert Gurr, "Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2012" (Centre for Systemic Peace, n.d.), http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm. This includes a number of detailed country profiles, such as "Polity IV Regime Trends: Yemen, 1946-2010," Center for Systemic Peace, 2011, http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/yem2.htm; "Polity IV Regime Trends: United Arab Emirates, 1971-2010," *Center for Systemic Peace*, 2011, http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/uae2.htm; "Polity IV Regime Trends: Iran, 1946-2010," *Center for Systemic Peace*, 2011, http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/irn2.htm; "Polity IV Regime Trends: Iraq, 1946-2010," *Center for Systemic Peace*, 2011, http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/irq2.htm; "Polity IV Regime Trends: Kuwait, 1963-2010," *Center for Systemic Peace*, 2011, http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/kuw2.htm.

24 In Mali, a democratic government was ousted from power by a military coup in 2012, after separatist and extremist rebels took control of the North. Although the government was reinstated with help from Western troops, the country remains susceptible to resurgent violence, with a badly bruised state apparatus, Tuareg rebels and al-Qaeda extremist still present in the North and sectarian tensions running high. More on this in the section on Religious and Ethnic Tensions.

25 Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz, *New Data on Autocratic Regimes* (Pennsylvania State University Authoritarian Regimes Data, September 8, 2012), 24–25, http://dictators.la.psu.edu/pdf/pp10.pdf.

26 Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, *New Data on Autocratic Regimes*.

27 Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and the Arab Spring," *International Interactions* 38, no. 5 (2012): 723.

28 The conflict has strong religious dimension, with Assad's Alawite (a Shi'a sect) regime backed by Hezbollah and Iran, versus predominantly Sunni rebels, backed by an unusual mix of Western states, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Sunni extremists groups, among which is also al-Qaeda. The causes of the Syrian civil war seem to include long-standing political feuds with the Sunni majority, which has unequal access to power and is subjected to discrimination, while Iran is supporting the Assad regime because of its strategic importance of the neighboring ally.

29 Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, *New Data on Autocratic Regimes*, 22.

30 In single party regimes the odds are stacked.

31 See Isobel Coleman and Terra Lawson-Remer, *Pathways to Freedom: Political and Economic Lessons from Democratic Transitions* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2013), 14. "Nonviolent mass mobilization against autocratic regimes is a strong trigger of democratic regime change.". See also; Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict," *International Security* 33, no. 1 (2008): 7–44.

32 Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS). *Turkey's Turmoil.* POMEPS Briefing 23. (Institute for Middle East Studies, George Washington University, January 13, 2014) http://pomeps.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/POMEPS_BriefBooklet23_Turkey_web.pdf

33 The longevity of monarchies indeed seems striking, with their total number remaining stable for over the last 50 years. Yet many monarchies in the Arab world have fallen since the colonial powers withdrew from the region, from Prince Ahmed Fuad II, the one year old King of Egypt and Sudan, to the Shah in Iran. See for example: Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, *New Data on Autocratic Regimes*, 8–9.

34 Christopher Boucek, "U.S.-Saudi Relations in the Shadow of the Arab Spring," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, June 11, 2011, http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/06/21/u.s.-saudi-relations-in-shadow-of-arab-spring/1s3.

35 Sean L. Yom and F. Gregory Gause III, "Resilient Royals: How Arab Monarchies Hang On," *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 4 (2012): 74–75, 80–86.

36 The Omani monarchy is the only Gulf regime that officially ruled by one monarch, Sultan Qaboos, but effectively the Sultan rules in name of the extended al Said family.

37 Sarah E. Yerkes, "Morocco: The Model for Reform," in *In The Arab Awakening: America and the Transformation of the Middle East* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 2011), 196–205.

38 Zoltan Barany, *The "Arab Spring" in the Kingdoms*, Research Paper (Qatar: Arab Center For Research and Policy Studies, September 2012), http://english.dohainstitute.org/file/get/e02ce87b-f3ab-45d3-bfd8-3f3e97f6a6a9.pdf.

39 Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "On Economic Causes of Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 50, no. 4 (1998): 563–73; David R. Hamilton, "Opportunity to Rebel: The Effects of Unemployment Coupled with Ethnic Divided on the Onset of Civil Conflict" (Political Science Thesis, Georgia State University, 2010).

40 Harry Quilter-Pinner and Graham Symons, *The Arab Spring and Economic Transition: Two Years On* (London: Foreign & Commonwealth Office: Department for International Development, 2013).

41 Padamja Khandelwal and Agustin Roitman, *The Economics of Political Transitions: Implications for the Arab Spring*, IMF Working Paper (International Monetary Fund--Middle East and Central Asia Department, 2013), 10.

42 GDP per capita, PPP (constant 2005 intl. $) refers to the value of all goods and services produced within a country for a given year (in this case, 2012), divided by the average population for the same year, converted using estimated purchasing power parity (PPP) rates. Data is given in constant 2005 international dollars, and taken from the World Bank's World Development Index (WDI) 2012, specifically "GDP per Capita, PPP (constant 2005 International $)" (The World Bank, 2012), http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.KD. Average GDP growth (%) rates over the periods 2000-2010 and 2011-2012 denote the annual percentage growth rate of GDP at market prices, aggregated to constant 2005 U.S. dollars. Both (and the difference between them) have been calculated using annual growth data obtained from database *GDP Growth (annual %)*, World Development Index (The World Bank, 2012), http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG. It must be noted that most of these databases do not cover the Palestinian Territories. As such GDP per capita data was gathered from United Nations Statistics Division, "Per Capita GDP in US Dollars--All Countries for All Years - Sorted Alphabetically (National Accounts Main Aggregates Database)," 2012, http://unstats.un.org/unsd/snaama/dnllist.asp. Note that GDP per capita figures for the Palestinian Territories are not available in international $, 2005 prices, but only in US$, current prices.

43 Ben W. Heineman, "Beyond the Coup: Egypt's Real Problem Is Its Economy," The Atlantic, July 10, 2013, http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/07/beyond-the-coup-egypts-real-problem-is-its-economy/277676/; Ertugrul Kayserilioglu, "Turkish Economist: Egyptian Coup Was Economic," trans. Timur Goksel, Al-Monitor, July 12, 2013, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulseen/politics/2013/07/egypt-coup-economic-turkish-economist-interview.html.

44 Benoît Faucon and Summer Said, "Libya Vows to Stop Rebel Plan to Sell Oil," The Wall Street Journal, January 8, 2014, http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303393804579308353600876342; Reuters, "Libya's Oil Exports Shrink to Just over 10% Capacity," Al-Arabiya, August 29, 2013, http://english.alarabiya.net/en/business/energy/2013/08/29/Libya-s-oil-exports-shrink-to-just-over-10-capacity.html. The $7 billion figure is named in Ayman Al-Warfalli, "Libyan Army in Heavy Fighting with Oil Port Rebels," *Reuters*, March 22, 2014, http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/03/22/libya-oil-fighting-idINDEEA2L04420140322; Ulf Laessing, "US Forces Hand over Seized Oil Tanker to Libya," *Reuters*, March 22, 2014, http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/03/22/uk-libya-oil-fighting-idUKBREA2L05X20140322.

45 International Crisis Group, *Blurring the Borders: Syrian Spillover Risks for Turkey*, Europe Report No 225 (Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2013); Ulrike Putz, "Civil War in Syria Destroying Economy," *Spiegel Online*, August 27, 2013, http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/civil-war-in-syria-destroying-economy-a-918815.html; Robert Satloff and David Schenker, "Political Instability in Jordan," *Council on Foreign Relations*, May 2013, http://www.cfr.org/jordan/political-instability-jordan/p30698.

46 Mohamed A. El-Erian et al., *Growth and Stability in the Middle East and North Africa* (Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, 1996), 5.

47 Robert Ohrenstein et al., *Emerging Trends in the Sovereign Wealth Fund Landscape* (KPMG International, 2013), http://www.kpmg.com/AE/en/Documents/2013/Emerging_trends_in_the_regional_SWF_landscape.pdf; Marwa Rashad and Olzhas Auyezov, "Saudi Healthcare Booms as State Scrambles to Close Welfare Gap," *Reuters*, January 19, 2014, http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/01/19/saudi-healthcare-idUSL5N0KQ0F220140119.

48 Raed H. Charafeddine, "The Economic and Financial Impacts of the Arab Awakening," 2011, 6.

49 Henrik Urdal, "A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence," *International Studies Quarterly* 50 (2006): 608; 611. Rahel Schomaker, "Youth Bulges, Poor Institutional Quality and Missing Migration Opportunities - Triggers of and Potential Counter-Measures for Terrorism in MENA," *Topics in Middle Eastern and African Economies* 15, no. 1 (2013): 116–40.

50 Urdal, "A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence."

51 Youth bulge (%) is defined by Urdal (2011) as "The percentage of the population aged 15-24 in the adult population, defined as those aged 15 or above". See Henrik Urdal, *Demography and Armed Conflict: Assessing the Role of Population Growth and Youth Bulges* (Leuven: Centre for Research on Peace and Development, 2011), 2, http://www.researchgate.net/publication/228533815_Demography_and_Armed_Conflict_Assessing_the_Role_of_Population_Growth_and_Youth_Bulges/file/9fcfd50b32baa7ecf8.pdf. The youth bulges for 2010 have been calculated from the data in United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Total Population (both Sexes Combined) by Five-Year Age Group, Major Area, Region and Country, 1950-2100 (thousands). Estimates, 1950-2010.*, World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision (United Nations Population Division, June 2013), http://esa.un.org/wpp/Excel-Data/population.htm. For the analysis, the youth bulge change by 2020 (%) has been calculated (under the assumption of constant fertility) from United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Total Population (both Sexes Combined) by Five-Year Age Group, Major Area, Region and Country, 1950-2100 (thousands). Constant Fertility, 2010-2100*, World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision (United Nations Population Division, June 2013), http://esa.un.org/wpp/Excel-Data/population.htm. Youth Unemployment (%) refers to the share of the labour force aged 15-24 who are unemployed but available for employment. Youth unemployment data is found in *Unemployment, Youth Total (% of Total Labor Force Ages 15-24)*, World Development Index (The World Bank, 2012), http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS. Most of the data is for 2012, though some countries only provide 2011 or 2010 data. It must be noted that most of these databases do not cover the Palestinian Territories. As such the Palestine youth unemployment figure is based on *Statistical Review on the Status of Palestinian Youth. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) On the Eve of International Youth Day 12/8/2012*. (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), December 8, 2012), 3, http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_youthIntDay2012E.pdf.

52 Ibid., 617–619; Urdal, *Demography and Armed Conflict*, 9.

53 Filipe R. Campante and David Chor, "Why Was the Arab World Poised for Revolution? Schooling, Economic Opportunities, and the Arab Spring," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 26, no. 2 (May 2012): 178.

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