

by which Europe as a whole can impose its will on one recalcitrant member. It may provide a forum in which agreements cobbled together elsewhere can be endorsed, as well as facilities for private conciliation, but it is unlikely to have much impact on the management of crises. The Yugoslavian crisis erupted as the new procedures were being settled, and occasioned the CSCE's first, unfortunately not very influential, statement.

At times of crisis, especially when based on a challenge to the norms of the international community, such as Saddam Hussein-type aggression, then well-placed would be the United Nations with its clear decision-making mechanisms in the Security Council and the mandatory nature of the measures that can flow from its decisions. The UN even has its own Military Staff Committee, although this remains dormant, and was not employed during the Gulf war. However, it is not an institution to which Europeans naturally look to solve their problems. It may have a role in some parts of the European periphery but to the extent that many of the key developments directly involve the Soviet Union – which is probable – then the Security Council could well be paralyzed because of the USSR's veto.

THE MAIN FEATURE OF THE ALTERNATIVES IS entrained in Western Europe. The Western European Union (WEU) has always been a transitional body – initially, after the war, as a means of demonstrating the resolve of Western European countries to defend themselves in order to convince the United States to come and help them. Then, in 1954, it provided an ingenious method of allowing West German rearmament by ensuring that reassuring limits were put on its future capability. Over time, Germany's rehabilitation rendered these limits unnecessary and the WEU became irrelevant. It was "revived" in the mid-1980s as a means of developing a strategic view for Western Europe, distinct from that of the United States.

While the WEU always had a military focus, it has never had a military organization, and its distinctive strategic view has rooted firmly in the context of an Atlantic Alliance. It has more legitimacy for some European countries than NATO and it has a less restrictive geographical frame of reference, but it is unlikely to become a free-standing institution in its own right. One problem is its membership which excludes some members of both the European Community (EC) and NATO, such as Norway and Turkey.

It is only being spoken of now as a "bridge" between NATO and the European Community or – for those anxious to see a separate European identity – the basis of the EC's military arm. This, however, raises the central problem

of any European defence identity: with a much reduced Soviet threat, it is possible to imagine Western Europe having sufficient front-line forces, but it is impossible in the foreseeable future for Europe to be able to cope with anything more than the most minor military operations without the support of American military logistics and intelligence.

Despite this basic constraint, there is a strong push among some European states, and

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especially the European Commission, for the Community to complete its project by taking on the full attributes of a sovereign state with its own foreign and defence policy. It is important not to underestimate the pressures reinforcing European co-operation. Practical decisions on new structures are seen as statements about the role of Europe in defence arrangements as well as the nature of future crisis management.

It is the economic magnetism of the Community which is most critical because it draws non-members towards it. Through grants and loans, association agreements and promises of eventual membership, the Community can play an integrative role throughout Europe. One difficulty, however, is that with each expansion of membership, those still excluded can feel more isolated. Another problem is that those anxious to push forward fastest with proposals for political union fear that this "deepening" process will be undermined by the extra complexities resulting from the further "widening" that comes from taking in new members.

TO THE EXTENT THAT THERE IS AN ECONOMIC dimension to managing crises, there is a natural Community role. This inevitably spills over into the political and even military arena, as can be seen in the case of Iraq. However, the Community is only one of a number of institutions available for the management of security problems, and the more prominent the military dimension of the crisis, the less likely the EC is to be chosen.

In cases where a military response remains unlikely, the Community is emerging as the natural leader in European crisis management, because of its economic strength and because it has effective decision-making mechanisms.

Member governments are in regular touch with each other – there are high-level meetings of one sort or another almost weekly – and this facilitates coordination. A common Community policy now tends to be implemented through the "troika" system. This brings together the foreign ministries of the past, current and next Presidents of the European Council (the Presidency changes every six months), the supreme political body in the Community.

In the case of Yugoslavia at the end of June, it was the troika which took the lead in trying to achieve a ceasefire and encourage a constitutional settlement. The mixed success of the effort indicated a number of problems with this sort of crisis diplomacy that need to be resolved if Community efforts are not to meet with regular frustration. Any serious engagement in these complicated affairs cannot take place

from a distance: it must be constant and based on a keen understanding of the nature of the crisis. It is tempting, as happened with Yugoslavia when the stress was placed on national unity above all, to forge consensus statements on the basis of wishful thinking rather than an informed grasp of local political realities.

THE PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS ARE MUCH greater if the Community activates itself while the crisis is still simmering and before it boils over. There was an abundance of evidence that Yugoslavia would explode at the end of June 1991, yet the international community remained curiously impassive during this process and only switched to emergency mode when violence erupted. As a result, in addition to the resolution of the existing political dispute, the Community faced the extra challenge of arranging a ceasefire in the face of a confusing and vicious situation. The difficulties of coping with conflict in a modest-sized country such as Yugoslavia bring home the potential scale of the problems if the next test-case turns out to be internal upheaval within the Soviet Union.

Europe now often appears to be looking for a balance of institutions to replace a balance of power, with institutions prospering to the extent that they can persuade countries to surrender national sovereignty. In practice, it is much more complex. The rich institutional framework can be reworked in a variety of ways depending on the nature of the crisis, and how this is done depends on governments. Though policy outputs increasingly come through trans-national institutions – because most problems are too substantial for individual countries to manage on their own – the main inputs still come from governments. Because there are a variety of choices, governments will decide in practice and through crisis, their preferred institutions. □