

## **Chapter 1**

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# **Changes in the European Strategic Environment: Their Impact on East Asia**

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Facing a set of unprecedented changes in its strategic environment, Europe today needs to address multiple threats and crises simultaneously. The first of those is the threat from the East, caused by Russia's aggressive behavior. Major pillars in response to that are reassuring allies and deterring Russia on the part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); those measures were reinforced at the NATO Summit held in Warsaw in July 2016. The second threat comes from the South, namely, the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East and Northern Africa. Amidst continuing air campaigns by the US-led international coalition against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), there is no prospect yet for peace in Syria, and the situation in Libya remains precarious. Related to that is the third threat: the so-called "threat from within," exemplified by the migration crisis and terrorist threats. While the number of refugees and migrants declined in 2016 compared with the previous year, the problem is far from over. Given that the threat level of terrorism remains high, the need for deeper cooperation between police and intelligence agencies across Europe has become more urgent. The "threat from within" was compounded by the United Kingdom's decision to withdraw from the European Union (EU) as a result of a referendum that took place on June 23, 2016. Europe is literally hit by "multiple crises."<sup>1)</sup>

Japan cannot be indifferent to Europe's changing strategic environment, as it affects Tokyo despite the geographical distance. There is overall concern that Europe will become inward-looking, preoccupied by the need to address its own problems within the region and in its neighborhood. More specifically from a Japanese perspective, what is important is how Europe's engagement in Asia—particularly its relations with China and its perception of that country—will evolve under such circumstances. While the European response to threats and crises within the region and in the neighborhood are not necessarily linked directly to its relations with China, the two issues can no longer be treated separately in light of Europe's expanding economic relationship with China and the increasing importance of that country in Europe's political and economic life. Furthermore, the deterioration of the security situation in and around Europe has forced the United States to increase its security engagement in Europe again. If the situation persists and the United States needs to spend larger amount of its resources on the security of Europe, the foundations of America's "pivot to Asia" could be undermined, given that one of the conditions of such policy was the assumption

that the US security burden in Europe and the Middle East would be reduced.

## **1. Simultaneous and Concurrent Responses to Multiple Threats**

The European Security Strategy (ESS), the EU's first security strategy document, adopted in December 2003, begins by stating that "Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free."<sup>2)</sup> In addition, NATO's supreme strategic document—"Strategic Concept," adopted in November 2010—said, "Today, the Euro-Atlantic area is at peace, and the threat of a conventional attack against NATO territory is low."<sup>3)</sup> Both documents demonstrate that the dominant perception has been that Europe is free from any imminent security threats, having enjoyed peace ever since the Cold War ended. Meanwhile, security issues in Europe have been primarily perceived in the context of its engagement outside the region in such places as Afghanistan, with a low priority placed on crises within the region, including territorial defense.

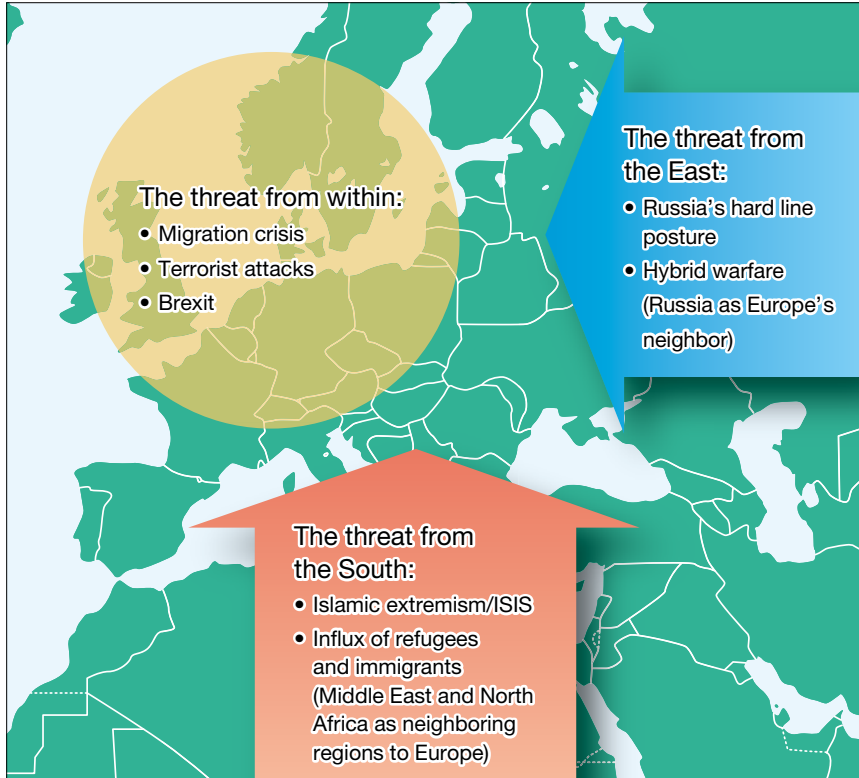
However, as stated by Federica Mogherini, currently the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, "Our region is in flames, both to the East and South,"<sup>4)</sup> with security no longer just a question of involvement in faraway lands. The perception of security in Europe has been forced to change rapidly.

### **(1) The Threat from the East: The Response toward Russia**

The first threat faced by Europe is that from the East, namely Russia. Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in March 2014 and its intervention in eastern Ukraine shocked Europe, which had been relatively stable until then. While respect for sovereignty and national borders as a fundamental principle is thought to have been widely accepted both by Europe and the international community at large, the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula presented a clear violation of such principle. As Ukraine is not a member of NATO, the alliance does not have an obligation to defend it, but countries bordering Russia, such as the three Baltic states and Poland, heightened their concern about Russia's aggressive posture.

Of concern in that context is not so much the possibility of regular Russian forces invading NATO countries, but rather so-called "hybrid warfare." Instead of

**Figure 1.1. The multiple threats and crises faced by Europe**



Source: Compiled by the author.

a mass invasion by regular army forces as postulated during the Cold War period, hybrid warfare refers to a complex strategy comprising, for example, the dispatch of irregular forces without insignia; activities using local forces, such as militias; political incitement against local residents; and cyberattacks, propaganda, and the intentional dissemination of false information (disinformation). Russia has been employing such methods in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. Although those elements of hybrid warfare are not necessarily new, the degree of integration has certainly been increased, which represents a new set of challenges to NATO.<sup>5)</sup>

In response to those new and resurgent threats from Russia, NATO has been compelled to strengthen the effectiveness and reliability of its collective defense.

There are two aspects to that effort: reassuring the allies and deterring Russia. The Wales NATO summit in September 2014 adopted the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) as a package of actions for both fronts. As for reassurance, especially for the “eastern allies” such as the Baltic states and Poland, the RAP strengthened joint exercises in those countries by increasing the frequency, expanding the scale and making the scenarios more robust and demanding, for which troops from other NATO members, including the United States, were sent to those countries. In particular, the repeated showing of video clips of US Army tanks being dispatched from the US mainland on local TV news programs and the like seem to have contributed greatly to reassurance, not least in a psychological sense. Following those measures, people in the Baltic states and Poland came to say that they finally became true NATO members.<sup>6)</sup> NATO’s efforts to reassure its allies seems to be working.

Meanwhile, on the deterrence front, the RAP calls for enhancing readiness of NATO troops in the name of “adaptation.” The highlight of that was the establishment of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) as an enhanced version of the NATO Response Force (NRF).<sup>7)</sup> Expectations were that it would strengthen the ability of NATO to respond to crises and contribute to deterring Russia. Although a certain degree of success has been achieved in reassurance, however, concerns persist over the effectiveness of NATO’s deterrence against Russia despite the adoption of the RAP at the Wales Summit. Russia continued to intervene in eastern Ukraine, while also making various military intimidations and demonstrations of its capabilities against NATO countries. Moscow’s intervention in Syria deepened NATO’s concerns. As a result, NATO came to the conclusion that more robust measures are now needed, leading to the decision at the NATO

summit in Warsaw in July 2016 to deploy one battalion each—consisting of around 4,000 NATO troops in total—to the three Baltic states and to Poland.<sup>8)</sup> Something more than just exercises were sought, and the deployment of those troops is separate from the VJTF, which is normally based in the troop-contributing countries.



Warsaw Summit (NATO photo)

However, due to its desire not to excessively provoke Russia, NATO maintained the spirit of the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997, an agreement between the two sides by which NATO tried to allay Russian concerns about the alliance's enlargement. NATO stated in that document that the enlargement will not involve the permanent stationing of "substantial combat forces" in the new NATO members – Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic at that time. In light of that, the Warsaw summit stressed that the dispatch of troops this time would be of "rotation" rather than "permanent stationing," describing it as "enhanced forward presence."<sup>9</sup>) However, the battalions, each led by a different country (namely, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany and Canada), are de-facto permanent forces in the sense that there will be no lull in deployment between their rotations. Precisely because of that permanent nature, the decision of the Warsaw summit can be seen as a new departure.

Nonetheless, each of the NATO battalions to be deployed this time is much smaller than the corresponding number of ground troops being maintained by Russia across the border, and they do not qualify as the "substantial combat forces" mentioned above. Therefore, the role of the NATO forces can only be used as a "tripwire," guaranteeing NATO's involvement in case of an emergency. Regardless of whether Russia uses hybrid warfare strategy or not, any of its attempts to intervene in those countries is now more likely to run up against NATO troops, meaning that Russia will bear greater cost and risk when taking such action. That is NATO's aim, and the demonstration of its capabilities is believed to contribute to deterrence vis-à-vis Russia.

In addition, NATO's acceptance of the demands of the Baltic states and Poland—all of which had vehemently sought the stationing of NATO troops—as well as the translation of those demands into actual action, is a testament to the alliance's unity. The Warsaw Summit communiqué stated that the purpose of the establishment of an enhanced forward presence was "to unambiguously demonstrate, as part of our overall posture, Allies' solidarity, determination, and ability to act by triggering an immediate Allied response to any aggression."<sup>10</sup>) It is also noteworthy that the NATO members managed to overcome their different positions on Russia and decided to enhance NATO's forward presence in the eastern allies. Furthermore, the fact that Europe is playing a major role, instead of leaving everything up to the United States, is also important in terms of alliance solidarity. That is exemplified by the fact that Germany—normally always

conscious of the need to maintain good relations with Russia—is leading the battalion deployed in Lithuania.<sup>11)</sup>

Besides various issues related to conventional military forces, NATO also became increasingly concerned about Russia’s nuclear saber-rattling. Russian President Vladimir Putin said later that he was prepared to raise the alert level of the country’s nuclear arsenal during the crisis over Crimea, and Russia continues nuclear saber-rattling and intimidation, including the use of nuclear attack scenarios in various military exercises.<sup>12)</sup> Of particular concern to NATO is Russia’s concept of using of nuclear weapons in a limited manner in the early stages of a regional conflict to terminate it on Russia’s terms. However, NATO’s initial response to Russia’s nuclear intimidation was low-key and slow, and the leaders attending the September 2014 NATO summit in Wales avoided mentioning the problem, given the high level of political sensitivity of the issues related to nuclear weapons in some countries in NATO, saying that they did not want to escalate nuclear tensions with Russia by taking a robust response.

However, as Russia’s nuclear saber-rattling continues unabated, there is a growing awareness within NATO that the situation could escalate unless the alliance makes a robust response. As a result, the communiqué adopted at the Warsaw Summit in July 2016 stated that, “Any employment of nuclear weapons against NATO would fundamentally alter the nature of a conflict,” strongly warning against the limited use of nuclear weapons. Using loaded words reminiscent of the Cold War, it went on to say, “If the fundamental security of any of its members were threatened, however, NATO has the capabilities and resolve to impose costs on an adversary that would be unacceptable and far outweigh the benefits that an adversary could hope to achieve.”<sup>13)</sup> That is a clear message for Russia, and simultaneously represents the severity of NATO concerns over Russia’s nuclear saber-rattling.<sup>14)</sup>

Because of its increasing awareness of the threat from Russia, countries in Europe are beginning to increase their defense budgets despite their tough financial situation. Although the scale of defense spending increase remains modest, the erstwhile trend of cutting defense spending seems to have ended.<sup>15)</sup> At the September 2014 NATO summit in Wales, the allies pledged to stop cutting defense spending and aim to “move toward” NATO’s guideline of spending two percent of their GDP on defense within a decade, i.e., by 2024.<sup>16)</sup> However, there was strong pessimism at the time, both inside and outside NATO, as to the



feasibility of achieving that target. Yet, given the deterioration in the strategic environment in Europe—not just the threat from Russia, but also that from the Middle East and Africa—and the threat of terrorism in the region, Germany and many other European countries, albeit not all of them, have decided to boost their defense spending.

Until recently, Europe had pursued “smart defense,” aiming to maintain capabilities through a more efficient use of their budgets, but on the premise of reduced defense spending. However, the increased threat posed by Russia has gone beyond what can be handled through such measures, so the perception has started to take root that increased defense spending is inevitable. Maintaining high-readiness forces like the VJTF is expensive. Furthermore, in addition to irregular forces, Russia is strengthening its anti-access and area denial (A2AD) capabilities, such as its air-defense missiles and anti-ship missiles, and is deploying those to various places, posing challenges to Europe. First, since A2AD intrinsically assumes a high-intensity conflict and involves highly sophisticated equipment, it is expensive. Second, because concerns about Russia’s A2AD are still relatively new, the debate has only just begun on how Europe can and should respond to it. In that area, a large capacity gap exists between the United States and Europe, and how to sort out the division of labor between the United States and Europe is a difficult challenge.<sup>17)</sup> In the meantime, the center of NATO’s focus is shifting from hybrid warfare, where the role of the military is limited, to counter-A2AD.

The evolution of NATO’s response following the Ukraine crisis can be summed up as follows. At the time of the 2014 NATO summit in Wales, the direction of the threat from Russia was still unclear, so a short-term response was developed. However, by the time of the NATO Summit in Warsaw in 2016, the threat was now viewed as long-term, thus shifting the emphasis toward a more sustainable response. In other words, NATO has concluded that Russia will not come back as a partner in the foreseeable future, and that it will instead be a military adversary requiring serious deterrence. The implication of that is significant, and such a perception can be said to underpin the increase in various countries’ defense spending as mentioned above.

As for the response to Russia after the Ukrainian crisis, the EU has also played a major, and in some sense a bigger, role. The most important pillar of that has been the imposition of economic sanctions against Russia. On March 17, 2014,

following the annexation of Crimea, the EU sanctioned Russia for the first time, and those sanctions were later tightened following Russia's intervention in eastern Ukraine as well as the shooting down of the Malaysia Airlines passenger jet; those sanctions remain in place today. The first targets of the sanctions were those individuals directly involved in the Crimea annexation (prohibition of their entry into the EU, and the freezing of their assets in the EU), but later expanded to sectoral economic sanctions.<sup>18)</sup> As many EU member states have had deep economic relations with Russia—the degree differing country by country—the imposition of sanctions against Russia places a heavy burden on some of the implementing parties as well. In addition, EU sanctions are always built upon a vulnerable foundation, given that the EU system calls for sanctions to be imposed and extended by consensus. Therefore, for the current sanctions against Russia to be maintained, intense diplomatic negotiations among EU member states often take place, with heads of government getting directly involved. Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel has played the primary role in building a consensus within the EU in imposing and expanding the sanctions. Not only did she bring together Germany domestically—despite the skeptical business sector—but also worked hard to get on board those who do not see Russia as a threat because of distance, such as Italy, Spain, and Portugal.<sup>19)</sup>

However, as the sanctions continue, a phenomenon that can be called “sanctions fatigue” has spread, particularly among those who pay a high cost. As a result, extending the sanctions has become more difficult. Moreover, Germany, which has maintained a hard line on sanctions so far, faces parliamentary (Bundestag) elections in the autumn of 2017. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) of Germany, which currently forms a coalition government with Chancellor Merkel's Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU), tends to be traditionally soft toward Russia, and in the election campaign, sanctions on Russia could get politicized, with far-reaching potential consequences for the EU's policy toward Russia as a whole.<sup>20)</sup>

For Russia to achieve the lifting or relaxation of the EU sanctions, it needs to break the EU consensus. The Putin administration is, therefore, believed to have been targeting the division of the EU. Such countries as Hungary, Greece, and Italy have started to entertain doubts about the extension of the sanctions. Besides the domestic problem of people reacting against the economic burden of the sanctions, there are several cases reported about the possible Russian connections

of certain politicians.

The Russian government and its related organizations are believed to be expanding influence operations in Western Europe through a mix of measures, including propaganda, disinformation, cyberattacks, and financial support to various xenophobic and extreme-right political forces.<sup>21)</sup> Given that Germany is going to hold a parliamentary election and France presidential elections, both in 2017, the level of concerns about Russia's efforts to influence their domestic politics has particularly increased in those two countries.<sup>22)</sup> It is in that context that Russia's intervention in the US 2016 presidential election, through cyberattacks and similar means, has attracted so much attention in Europe.

Furthermore, the launch of the Donald Trump administration in the United States is likely to affect Europe's policy toward Russia. During the election campaign, then-candidate Trump repeatedly praised Russian President Vladimir Putin, and insisted on improving relations with Russia. At the same time, though, he did not hide his contempt for NATO, and sounded as if the US security commitment to NATO were conditional. As the deterioration of the US-Russia relations is a structural problem that goes beyond the relationship between two individual leaders, Obama and Putin, a change in the US administration alone will not solve problems. Nonetheless, President Trump's remarks so far are a source of great concern, not least to the Baltic states and Poland, which need a strong NATO defense and deterrence the most for their territorial defense. It will be virtually impossible for the EU to maintain a consensus on continuing sanctions should the United States renege on them, representing a new factor of uncertainty for Europe.<sup>23)</sup>

### **(2) The Threat from the South: Turbulence in the Middle East and North Africa**

One of the most difficult features of security problems in Europe today is that it must simultaneously deal with the threat from the South—the problems of the Middle East and North Africa—as well as the threat from the East, the first-ever experience since World War II.<sup>24)</sup> The threat from Russia is diverse in nature, yet it is still a sovereign state, whereas in the Middle East and North Africa, issues are more complicated and Europe needs to deal with such non-state actors as ISIL. In addition to military elements, the threat from the Middle East and North Africa includes the influx of refugees and migrants to Europe, and it is also inseparable from concerns about terrorism, necessitating cooperation among various

government agencies, not only the militaries, but also the police and justice organizations.

The situation in the Middle East and North Africa, both geographically close to Europe, has always had a direct impact on the security of Europe. Europe simply cannot escape from what takes place in those regions. For example, the bulk of Turkish territory—a NATO member—lies in the Middle East, and it is just natural that European countries such as France and Italy facing the Mediterranean are always directly affected by the situation of North Africa lying across the sea. The Middle East and Africa, while far from Japan, are both Europe's neighbors, so the peace and stability of those areas affect the peace and stability of Europe itself in a direct manner.

Turkey borders with Iran, Iraq, and Syria, making it strategically the most important front-line state for Europe and the United States in their efforts to address threats and challenges in the Middle East. There are estimated 2.7 million Syrian refugees and migrants now staying in Turkey. Furthermore, Turkey itself is often a direct party to the conflict, with such cases occurring as a Turkish fighter jet shooting down a Russian fighter jet that had infiltrated Turkish airspace during an operation over Syria in November 2015, suddenly straining the relationship between the two countries. The treatment of Kurds living in Turkey, Iraq, and Syria—who do not have a sovereign state of their own—is a particularly sensitive issue for Ankara, and its intervention in Syria and Iraq is often carried out from the viewpoint of preventing the expansion of Kurdish forces within Turkey.

As for ISIL, which claims possession of a swath of “territory” in Iraq and Syria, the US-led international coalition started mainly air campaigns in the autumn of 2014, based on a series of UN Security Council resolutions. However, those campaigns are not aimed at eliminating the ISIL, nor are they intended to oust the Bashar al-Assad regime of Syria. The aim of the coalition forces is more limited, which is mainly to prevent the ISIL from expanding its area of control. That has not changed by the strengthening of the coalition efforts, particularly those of France following the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015. If the aim were to defeat the ISIL itself, a deployment of substantial ground troops would be needed. However, no Western country is prepared to send ground troops to Syria aside from sending a limited number of special operations forces.<sup>25</sup> In addition, Russia's military intervention in Syria has greatly restricted room for maneuver of the United States and Europe, even were they to have the willingness and

capability to intervene more decisively. With the emergence of Russia as a major actor, the threats from the East and South are now linked for Europe, signifying an increase in the number of elements requiring consideration by Europe. As for the peace process in Syria, although negotiations undertaken so far have been led by the United States and Russia, including provisional ceasefire agreements, their prospect is far from certain and Europe's role remains limited.

Europe plays a more central role in Africa than it does in the Middle East. Since 2013, France has sent troops to Africa, first to Mali and next to the Central African Republic (CAR), for Paris-led operations to address the increasing instability in those countries, especially caused by the surge of Islamic extremism. Although most of the troops dispatched to the CAR were subsequently withdrawn, such moves by France have served as precautionary measures to prevent the spread of extremist forces to North African countries lying along the Mediterranean littoral, such as Algeria and Tunisia. Should those two countries come under the control of extremist forces, the next to feel the effects would be France, situated just across the Mediterranean. For Paris, then, stopping the spread of Islamic extremism and containing it in Mali and the CAR are important national security imperatives. Therefore, while France has reduced its defense expenditures and cut capabilities in overall terms, it has maintained its willingness and (minimum) capability to engage in Africa, including unilaterally if needed.<sup>26)</sup>

In addition, Libya is extremely important from the perspective of its direct impact on Europe. In 2011, NATO, primarily under the leadership of Europe, carried out air campaigns in Libya, and succeeded in overthrowing the Muammar Gaddafi regime, although various problems occurred in the execution of the campaigns.<sup>27)</sup> However, it can be said that the political instability following the collapse of the Gaddafi regime provided conditions for the ISIL to expand its influence in Libya. In response to those circumstances, a UN-led political process has been underway since the end of 2015, and the EU and NATO have repeatedly expressed their readiness to provide security-related support to a new Libya government if so requested. However, there is no consensus among major European countries about the way in which they engage in Libya, leaving uncertainties about the future of Europe's engagement there. One thing which is clear, nonetheless, is that it is highly unlikely that the West will send ground troops on a large scale to Libya, in light of the fact that, first, the United States and Europe did not send substantial ground troops on the occasion of the 2011 NATO campaign, and

second, the fact that the general reluctance in the West regarding the idea of sending ground troops to the Middle East again does not seem to have changed.

Finally, it must be pointed out that individual European countries differ greatly in terms of their evaluation of the magnitude of the threat from the South, just as with their evaluation of the threat from the East. For instance, the Middle East and Africa—familiar to such countries as France, Italy, and Greece—are remote when seen from the Baltic states and Poland. Even in traditional Western Europe, Germany's engagement in Africa is limited compared with that of Britain and France. It might be possible to criticize the lack of consensus in threat perceptions within the alliance, it would not be a particularly constructive way to look at the state of NATO. Even during the Cold War, when there was a clear threat from the Soviet Union, the threat perception by different NATO members was not perfectly aligned with each other. The real challenge is how to manage the gaps, rather than try to eliminate them.

From that viewpoint, the fact that NATO appears to be dealing with the threats from the East and the South in an equal manner represents a sort of diplomatic compromise, rather than because of an objective reflection of the situation on the ground. When viewed in light of NATO's fundamental purpose of ensuring collective defense among member states through military means, it is clear that NATO's main mission is to deal with the threat from the East instead of the threat from the South. That being said, it cannot avoid considering the threat from the South, for the purpose of bringing its member states together. While not playing down the importance of the threat from the South for Europe, one cannot deny, in any case, that the nature of the threat from the East fundamentally differs from that to the South.

### **(3) The Threats from Within: Terrorism, the Migration Crisis, and Brexit**

In addition to external threats from the East and South, Europe faces several “threats from within” today, the first being the migration crisis, the second the threat of terrorism, and the third Britain's withdrawal from the EU (Brexit), which has shaken EU to the core. Although terrorism and the migration crisis are mainly related to the threat from the South, Brexit is more or less an internal EU issue.

The migration crisis started capturing considerable attention in Europe and elsewhere around the summer of 2015, when there was a sharp increase in the

influx of refugees and migrants, particularly from Syria. However, the increase in refugees and migrants drifting across the Mediterranean to Italy, mainly from such African countries as Libya, Nigeria and Eritrea, had already developed into a big problem before 2015. While originally being a humanitarian issue, the problem has also grown to encompass the issues of border management, organized crime, and the maintenance of domestic security. Consequently, it has come to be regarded as an important national security issue in many parts of Europe.

The first factor bringing about such a perception change has been the scale of the problem. When the influx was still small, all the European authorities had to do was accept and examine each asylum application in turn, and then provide support in accordance with international and domestic law. Indeed, many European countries have accepted a certain number of asylum seekers for many years, while dismissing applications from so-called economic migrants. However, as a result of the large-scale influx in recent years, the rate of people applying for asylum has now far exceeded the speed at which such applications can be processed. At the same time, the situation has reached the point that public areas in major cities have become packed with people waiting to make asylum applications, and de-facto refugee camps are being set up. The nature of the problem in such a situation thus differs greatly from that of routine process of granting asylum.

Second, it is difficult to deny the existence of a certain link between refugees and migrants, on the one hand, and terrorism, on the other. It goes without saying that much of the influx—especially as far as the Syrians are concerned—consists of asylum seekers forced out of their homeland by civil war. However, looking at the refugee applications in 2015, some 890,000 people came to Germany alone, and the truth is that not every applicant is an exemplary citizen. For example, some of the instigators of the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris were Syrian migrants who had come to Europe via Turkey. Those facts have compounded people's wariness about accepting refugees and migrants.

Furthermore, the increasing severity of the migrant crisis in Europe has also destabilized domestic politics in several countries. In such major countries as Germany and France, support has increased for extreme right, nationalist, xenophobic and populist forces appealing for the exclusion for refugees and migrants, forcing existing mainstream political parties into a corner. Behind that is the recognition that people's daily lives, including employment and public safety,

is believed to be increasingly threatened by the massive acceptance of refugees and migrants, and the strong dissatisfaction with the existing political parties and governments, which are viewed as failing to address that particular crisis.

The EU and its member states have bolstered their efforts to control refugee and migrant issues. One pillar of that is the EU's attempt to introduce an allocation scheme for more equitably sharing the burden of accepting refugees and migrants within the EU. Several EU members have resisted that plan, though, and very little has been accomplished so far. Instead, the action expected to have the most immediate effect now is cooperation with the Turkish government to stop the actual influx of people. In March 2016, an agreement was reached between Brussels and Ankara to block all illegal entry into Greece via Turkey, and for it to accept all illegal immigrants being repatriated from Europe.<sup>28)</sup> That deal was led by Chancellor Merkel of Germany, whose hand was forced by domestic reaction against her acceptance of refugees and migrants. The EU also promised Turkey to revive its membership accession negotiations, as well as to accelerate the introduction of visa-free travel for Turks traveling to Europe, and contributing 6 billion euros to Turkey for immigration control expenses. Essentially, the agreement was to hold back refugees and migrants—mainly from Syria—coming into Europe via Turkey in exchange for substantial financial support, although it was also linked to negotiations for EU accession. Within Europe, critics have emerged saying that such measures contradict the principle of granting asylum to refugees under international law, and on account of humanitarian considerations. Still, the fact that the agreement was compiled at all shows the urgency of the political and social situation in Germany and other EU countries regarding the issues of migration.

As for the threat of renewed terrorist attacks—the “threat from within”—the November 2015 attacks in Paris proved to be a turning point. The number of victims in those attacks amounted to 130 people, seriously shocking not only France but Europe as a whole. In 2016, as well, there were several terrorist attacks—Brussels in March, Nice in July and Berlin in December—so the threat of terrorism is showing no sign of easing up. Of those, the Paris and Brussels incidents were planned attacks using explosives, whereas both the Nice and Berlin incidents involved the use of heavy trucks crashing into people at event venues. Moreover, other incidents have involved the firing of machine guns. Cases involving the use of explosives often require networks, heightening the possibility



that police and intelligence agencies in various countries can detect them, but given that a truck hijacking or machine-gun shooting can be carried out by an individual working alone, the reality is such terrorist acts are more difficult to prevent.

While the relationship between Syrian refugees and migrants and the series of terrorist attacks is still a politically sensitive topic, what has drawn even more attention is “homegrown” Islamic terrorists who were born and raised in Europe, and who carry out terrorism on European territory inspired by violent extremists. In addition, a growing number of second-generation or third-generation immigrants in Europe, inspired by extreme thinking, are traveling to Syria and elsewhere to receive ISIL military training and participate in actual fighting. When they return to their home countries, they represent a great threat to society. Since such people have EU nationality and passports, it is practically impossible to deny their entry or expel them abroad.

Given the increased threat of terrorism across Europe, it has become incumbent upon EU countries to bolster their intelligence-sharing and cooperation in border control. The first wakeup call in that regard was the attack on the office of the magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2015 in Paris. Afterward, the EU started to strengthen intelligence and police cooperation.<sup>29)</sup> As for the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, some of the terrorists who conducted the attacks were based in Brussels and came to join the attackers in Paris, highlighting the problem of the free movement of terrorists within the EU, as anyone—terrorists as well as civilians—can move freely between countries that have signed the Schengen Agreement, without having to pass through migration control. Stimulated by the failure to prevent the Paris attacks, cooperation steadily grew between authorities in France and Belgium, which has resulted in the detainment of one attacker in Brussels in March 2016, a successful case of such cooperation.<sup>30)</sup> One of the perpetrators of the terrorist attack in Berlin in December 2016 was shot dead about a week later after a gun battle with police officers in Milan, Italy. Although that can also be labeled the fruit of police cooperation, the fact cannot be denied that the terrorists had easily crossed national borders.<sup>31)</sup> In addition, because of its

very nature, cooperation among intelligence agencies from different countries is more difficult than police cooperation, so the future focus of European antiterrorism measures will be on whether it is possible to transform the organizational culture itself of intelligence agencies.

Another aspect of the EU's response to the November 2015 terrorist attack in Paris concerned the invocation of the mutual assistance clause in Article 42.7 of the Treaty on the European Union (Treaty of Lisbon). The provision stipulates mutual assistance among EU member states in the event of an armed invasion against EU member state(s), and is equivalent to the collective defense clause contained in Article 5 of NATO's North Atlantic Treaty. As far as the NATO member states of the EU were concerned, the provision was neither much noted nor even much known about, as it was never assumed that the EU would take on a collective defense function, but it was invoked for the first time ever in response to the November 2015 incident. It is believed that France, which had invoked the clause, wanted the EU as a whole to take a firm stance against terrorism, as well as to share the burden of military operations currently borne by France in such African countries as Mali and the CAR, while also promoting further European participation in the US-led international coalition against the ISIL in Syria and Iraq.<sup>32)</sup> Indeed, the United Kingdom and Germany and others did expand their support for airstrikes against ISIL, albeit on a rather minor scale.

While Europe is aware of the limits to making military responses to terrorism, it does recognize that military power must be exercised when the need arises. Also, France continues to deploy its military against terrorism. Since each country in Europe has a different legal system, there are still major differences within the region, particularly regarding the deployment of troops. Still, it is true that the idea of using force as an antiterrorism measure has been accepted there already, to a certain extent.

Europe, already suffering from multiple crises in the form of the refugee and immigrant crisis and the threat of terrorism, found that situation compounded by the problem of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU ("Brexit"). In a referendum held on June 23, 2016, British voters chose to leave the EU, and the impact of their decision has since extended beyond that region to the rest of the world. It marks the first time that a member state will have withdrawn from the EU. Former British prime minister David Cameron, who had favored remaining in the EU, resigned in response to the referendum results. His successor as prime

minister, Mrs. Theresa May (Home Secretary in the Cameron cabinet), had also supported remaining in the EU during the run-up to the national referendum, but appealed for the steady implementation of the vote results, saying “Brexit means Brexit” after taking office. At the time of this writing, there was no formal notice of the United Kingdom’s intention to withdraw under Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon stipulating withdrawal from the EU. Britain is currently at the stage of considering how its negotiation stance should be with the EU during withdrawal proceedings, and what it ought to seek in its relationship with the EU once withdrawal is effected.

The issues surrounding the modality of the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the EU have since converged on whether to remain in the EU single market and the customs union. They focus on either retaining access to a single market and emphasizing economic interests (a “soft Brexit”), or placing priority on such political considerations as the United Kingdom’s introduction of its own immigration regulations and the abolition of the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the EU (a “hard Brexit”). That is because the free movement of workers within the region (migration within the EU) is one of the essential elements of the EU single market, and the introduction of immigration control and participation in a single market are inherently incompatible. Although the rhetoric of the prime minister and others arguing for “regaining sovereignty” is both easy for the public to understand and politically appealing, it will not be simple for the United Kingdom to come to a decision how willing it is to accept the associated economic costs.<sup>33)</sup> The economic impact will especially be enormous for Japan.<sup>34)</sup> It is unclear how the actual negotiations between the United Kingdom and the EU will progress in the future, but in January 2017, the prime minister announced her thoughts about aiming for “a bold and ambitious free trade agreement” with the EU that would opt out of the single market and customs union alliance.<sup>35)</sup> Although that would be tantamount to a de-facto “hard Brexit,” the May government seems to prefer using the phrase “clean break.”<sup>36)</sup>

When considering Brexit from a broader perspective of international relations and security, the first challenge is the concern that the EU could turn inward because of the need to deal with Brexit. Second, it is the problem of protracted uncertainty. At the minimum, until London invokes Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon, nothing would happen in concrete terms between the EU and the United Kingdom. The third issue is the effect of Brexit on the EU’s political balance of

power. It is almost certain that the relative influence of the Eurogroup—namely, those countries participating in the euro single currency—will rise because of the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the EU. Additionally, insofar as security and defense aspects are concerned, the possibility exists that the influence of the “Europeanist school” (France, etc.) emphasizing the EU, will strengthen vis-à-vis the “Atlanticist school” (led by the United Kingdom) emphasizing NATO. The fourth issue that can be pointed out in that connection is the weakening of the EU as an actor in foreign and security policy after the United Kingdom’s withdrawal. London has accounted for nearly a quarter of the total defense budget of EU member states combined, and if that contribution were to be lost, the EU would find the tools of its diplomacy and security policy constrained correspondingly. It would also inevitably have an impact on the value of the EU as a diplomatic and security partner for Japan.

## **2. The Implications for East Asia, and the Direction of East Asian Engagement in Europe**

### **(1) A Choice between Facing Inward or Boosting Asian Engagement**

Europe’s changing strategic environment bears great significance for Japan and the rest of East Asia, despite the geographical distance. First, there are general concerns that Europe will become inward-looking, preoccupied with the problems within its own region and neighborhood. In light of the increasingly severe strategic environment in East Asia, Tokyo is trying to reach out countries in other parts of the world, including Europe, as new political and security partners. Should Europe become inward-looking and decrease its engagement in Asia, it would cause concerns in Tokyo.

It is also a challenge for Europe. The recognition has gradually taken hold in Europe that Asia’s security situation—with the rise of the region as a whole, particularly China—affects not only Europe’s prosperity but also its security. Such an awareness can be found in various strategy documents adopted by individual countries in Europe, such as France and the United Kingdom, as well as in the EU’s Global Strategy released in June 2016.<sup>37)</sup> Europe cannot afford to step back as a bystander if tensions fester between Japan and China, as well as between China and the United States, and an increasing number of experts and officials are

getting serious about Europe's need to be prepared for such contingencies.<sup>38)</sup>

At the same time, maintaining engagement in Asia appears to have become a sort of litmus test for the EU as a global player, as well as for such major European countries as the United Kingdom and France, which hope to continue such a role. Precisely owing to pressing European problems, there seems to be a kind of inverse dynamics in action, by which European countries feel that they must show the seriousness of their engagement in Asia. One example of that was the dispatch of a Typhoon fighter jet unit from the Royal Air Force to Japan in October and November of 2016, where it conducted a joint training with the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF), called “Guardian North 16.”<sup>39)</sup> It was the first time that the JASDF held joint training with another country besides the United States inside Japan. The joint training was agreed upon at the Japan-UK Foreign and Defence Ministers' Meeting (“2+2”) in January the same year.<sup>40)</sup> For the United Kingdom—which had been cutting its defense budget under austerity following the 2008 financial crisis—the move was part of the realization of its 2015 Strategic Defense and Security Review (SDSR), which put an end to the country's shrinking foreign commitments. That document positions Japan as the United Kingdom's “closest security partner in Asia.”<sup>41)</sup> In addition, during the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, hosted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in May 2016, French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian argued that France had often been sending naval vessels to the South China Sea, and suggested that European countries coordinate their actions to realize a more permanent European presence in the region.<sup>42)</sup> That is in line with France's increasing engagement in Asia, not just in economic terms, but increasing in political and security terms as well.<sup>43)</sup> Despite the constraints of its military assets and the high priority continuing to be placed on its neighborhood—Russia, the Middle East and Africa—the awareness is steadily rising in Europe that it needs to rectify the traditional bias toward economic affairs in its relations with Asian countries and make them more balanced with security concerns.



**UK-Japan Joint Fighter Training** (Japan Ministry of Defense)

## **(2) Europe's Evolving Perceptions of China**

Secondly, in relation to that, the way in which Europe's engagement with Asia will evolve under such circumstances is a matter of great concern to Japan, especially Europe's relationship with China and its perceptions of that country. Although the emergence of various threats and crises in Europe does not always affect the region's relationship with China directly, the two can no longer be considered totally separate either after the worsening economic and fiscal situation in Europe, with expanded economic ties with China often coming to be viewed as part of the solution.

In Japan, perceptions that Europe is "too soft on China" remain persistent. The origin of that sentiment in today's context was a debate that surfaced in 2005 over the lifting of an EU arms embargo on China. In 1989, following the Tiananmen Square Incident, one of the sanctions imposed by what was then the European Community (EC) on China was an embargo on the export of lethal weapons—a measure that continues to this day. Judging from the debate over the lifting of the embargo at that time, it was clear that Europe was seriously optimistic, or even naïve, about China.<sup>44)</sup> More recently, during a visit by China's Xi Jinping in October 2015, the United Kingdom appeared almost defenseless in the way it extended effusive hospitality, and its near failure to raise any political or security issues while concentrating only on economic matters was reported critically in Japan.<sup>45)</sup> It also came as a shock to both Japan and the United States when Britain announced, in the same year, its participation in the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), making it the first major industrialized country to do so. Japan's economic relationship with China is of critical importance, and Tokyo is not calling the economic relationship between Europe and China itself into question. The problem is Europe's seeming silence on various political and security issues with China and its stance on managing export controls, including dual-use products, for fear of provoking Beijing and putting its economic relationship with China in danger.

On the other hand, Europe's perceptions of China have deteriorated significantly over the past several years. The biggest factor behind that is the spreading awareness of China as an economic threat. There is strong antipathy toward China in the textile industry and others that have been directly affected by the flood of cheap imports from that country, and more recently, there is also increasing wariness about Chinese investment. The longer Europe experiences a recession, the more welcoming it tends to be for investment from the outside, including

China, but such investment can be also problematic depending on the category. The May government of the United Kingdom cancelled the signing ceremony for the Hinckley Point C Nuclear Power Plant project in southwestern England at the last minute and decided to review it again. Although the project was later cleared and went ahead, there were reportedly security concerns about the involvement of Chinese firms in the construction and operation of such important infrastructure.<sup>46)</sup>

Meanwhile, the German government has intervened to stop the Chinese acquisition of companies, such as the semiconductor manufacturer Aixtron SE and a leading robot technology firm, Kuka AG. German Deputy Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel, who also serves as minister of economy, has gone so far as to propose new restrictive measures at the EU level on the acquisition of companies by state-owned enterprises (SOEs).<sup>47)</sup> Although such arguments ostensibly call for reciprocity in the investment environment, they also demonstrate increasing concern in Europe about the political and security impact of such investments. At the same time, the level of general optimism about the prospect of Chinese economy is also declining as the growth rate becomes lower. When the future seemed bright, people tend to only look at the positive aspects, but now that the tide has changed, the negative aspects are attracting more attention. Such a situation is markedly prominent in Germany, where both expectations toward and dependence upon the Chinese market have been particularly high.<sup>48)</sup>

In sum, the changes in the European perception of China have driven by growing economic concerns, including trade and investment. That constitutes a substantial difference with Japan, where security concerns are more featured. However, since 2015 or so, the European media have frequently reported the situation in the South China Sea, resulting in an increasing level of awareness among officials and experts about the security challenges that China poses. Now the question is whether and how such an awareness can be translated into Europe's concrete policy toward China and Asia. In addition, Europe has traditionally had a high level of interest in China's human rights situation. There has been a growing criticism in Europe of the oppression of Chinese intellectuals and the tightened control of Hong Kong by the Xi Jinping regime. As far as those issues are concerned, at least, the European media tend to have a higher degree of interest than is present in the Japanese media.

### **(3) The Turbulence in Europe and Its Impact on the US Pivot to Asia**

Third, the fact that the United States now needs to increase its security commitment to Europe because of the deterioration of the security environment there—the “refocus” on Europe—also affects East Asia, including Japan. One of the prerequisites for the American “pivot to Asia” had been the lessened need for its security engagement in Europe (and the Middle East). Around 2012, when the policy was inaugurated, Europe was thought to be relatively stable, and the United States was about to leave Iraq and Afghanistan, bringing an end to its protracted involvement there. Today, both premises are collapsing, and that could affect the US engagement in Asia.

James Stavridis, former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and currently dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in the United States, warned, given Russia’s influence in the Middle East, particularly its A2AD capability in and around Syria, that “The Eastern Mediterranean will be a more significant flashpoint than the South China Sea over the next several decades.”<sup>49)</sup> Also, Nicholas Burns, former US undersecretary of state for political affairs, said that while the importance of the “pivot to Asia” could not be denied, “The next American president must look to Europe first,” adding that, especially at times of crisis, “America’s global fortunes depend in large part on the vital link with Europe especially at times of crisis.”<sup>50)</sup> One might want to ignore such statements as the viewpoints of a waning generation of the US diplomatic and security policy community that is ignorant of Asia. However, such statements without doubt represent a mainstream perception regarding international security environment and US foreign relations. Therefore, Japan needs first to grasp the strategic issues that the United States faces, and take those into account when making its own decisions.

In other words, while answers to the questions of “Which is the bigger potential threat, Russia or China?” and by extension, “Which of those is more important?” might be evident for Japan, it must always be conscious of the fact that the United States does not necessarily derive the same answers. Therefore, when Japan deals with China and insists on the importance of Asia vis-à-vis the United States, it is always indispensable to fully understand what security and strategic threats and challenges the United States faces not only in Asia, but also in other parts of the world, including the state of US commitment to Europe and its perception of



Russia. Put simply again, the security environment in areas outside East Asia, including Europe, greatly affects US policy toward Asia.

Japan also needs to pay greater attention to Europe's strategic environment, for the same reason. If Tokyo wants to share with Europe its perception of China, it must be prepared to be asked how willing it is, at the same time, to share Europe's perception of the urgent issues facing that region, such as the migrant crisis and the problems in coping with Russia. Although that will not be an easy task for Japan, the world is connected in various ways, and for Tokyo to address current problems in international relations and security, it needs global perspectives and equally global response. Just as Europe cannot maintain its prosperity and security by only turning inward, Japan's economic and security interests can only be safeguarded through global engagement beyond its own region.

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