

Alternative futures: anarchy, gated communities or global learning

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Klaus Segbers

Alternative Futures:
Anarchy, Gated Communities,
or Global Learning

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1. Introduction¹

The pace of changes in world politics seems to be enormous, and it is. This impression may be stronger among people still remembering the seemingly cozy times of the Cold War than by those who were born and grew up more recently . There is hardly any doubt that most people on this planet, no matter where and how they live, and how well-trained they are in analyzing political processes -, find it difficult to understand the character of the processes going on around them. If we do not comprehend the context and texture of our present, however, it is risky to think about our future, or to make predictions.

Thus I start with the factors that I think are a given now, and will be for the foreseeable future. This includes the question of what is new and what is not so new after 1989/91 and after September 2001.

Then I proceed by defining the variables which will over the next ten years determine the two most relevant global political outcomes: the prospects for stability and cooperation.

And finally I draw up three scenarios for how we might get from now to then. These are: the Coming Anarchy; Gated Communities; and Global Learning. These three scenarios will be developed for nine cases: Capital, energy, and content flows; the roles of the United States, the Russian Federation, the European Union, and China, respectively; regional conflicts; and structural problems.

While the views outlined in this article are German and European positions, they are certainly not *the* German or, even less so, *the* European way of reasoning.

¹ I would like to thank Gwendolyn Sasse and Björn Warkalla for their helpful comments on the draft version of this paper.

2. Making sense of changes in World Politics

The Traditional Context

Many analytical and political problems result from concepts which are deeply embedded in Cold War thinking and, more general, in the logic of the Westphalian state system. Textbooks, the media, families, political decision makers and, to some extent, researchers still use terms and concepts for making sense of world politics that were, and are, a result of a bygone era. These 'old' concepts are not - or only partly - able to cover the reality of global politics in the early 21st century.

After the Thirty Years' War, a new concert of powers and new rules for the international game were established. Concepts like sovereignty and territoriality became the international norm. The notion of the modern nation state as the main agent for developing national economies and for protecting oneself against competitors and intruders, for providing public goods and creating homogeneous cultural spaces came to the fore. It was rather effective, and has been close to being worshipped ever since. Collecting taxes, organizing armed forces and educational systems became the main internal functions of governments. Establishing, defending and sometimes moving borders were the decisive external tasks. Going to war was not the first option but quite a legitimate one, once no other options for protecting the state's interests were available.

The macrostructure of politics changed twice in the 20th century: The first World War signified and brought about the decline of at least three empires: the Ottoman, the Russian, and the British empire. Post-revolutionary Russia was on her way toward a mobilizational as well as an etatistic "socialism in one country"; post-revolutionary Germany on her way toward a belated and derailed modernization, finally executed in the form of national socialism; and Japan had to cope with a difficult adaptation to the modernization process that started after the Meiji revolution and was always held back by traditional patterns. These three countries, their domestic instability and the resulting international disequilibria produced upheaval and destruction.

The global economy experienced a shift from the first generation motors of industrialization, the steam engine, iron, textiles and steel, to motor vehicles (auto manufacturing), electricity and the chemical industry. The great depression in the late 1920s was a reminder that this development did not proceed smoothly. The interwar-period was culturally stimulating, but politically and economically inherently unstable.

The Second World War, resulting from these destabilizing factors, ended with the establishment of a new macrostructure. From now on, symbolized by the Yalta Conference, there were two powers, defending their respective blocs centered around two poles: The US-led part of the world, driven by largely market-regulated mechanisms, organized in formal democracies and generating increasing wealth for the "developed" parts of the world; and the USSR-led group of states, driven by an extensive growth model, organized in formal one-party systems and reproducing itself by administrative markets and all-encompassing bargaining mechanisms, providing basic social services on a rather low level.

Most of the other states had to opt for one of the two sides. Shifting between them was possible – sometimes. Keeping out of the conflict between the two sides during the Cold War was difficult, and China was the only – and growing – player who managed to do so. In those four decades automatization and electronics, computers and biotechnology engulfed all the most developed sectors of the world economy. In contrast to its predecessor, this period was intrinsically stable – contrary to widespread assumptions at the time. While there were serious international crises and even regional wars (1950/51 in Korea, 1967 in the Middle East, and in the 1960s and early 1970s Vietnam), a direct military confrontation between the two powers was never likely.

This period was characterized by a binary code, notwithstanding attempts to defect from this logic by some liberalizing elites and countries in the “Third World” and by political movements even at the core of the two blocs (Budapest 1956, Paris and Berlin in 1967, Prague and Berkeley 1968, Italy and France in the 1970s). Basically, it was “them versus us”, between two world blocs, and this gruesome logic was forced upon all movements and persons who carefully or desperately tried to “break out”, as dissenters in the Eastern bloc experienced with more force and brutality but no less dichotomic intensity than the new political and social movements in the West.

This was the period of the Cold War, while apparently fought over values and ideologies, in which on closer inspection economic interests, aspects of (in)security and raw power mattered more. Strategic interaction between the two blocs and their lead actors was embedded in a web of institutions and bargaining mechanisms, offering guaranteed spaces for domination patterns, economic and otherwise, inside those blocs. What is important here for our argument and what should not be forgotten is that beyond all details and differences this bipolar macro system was stable, and it provided at least a basic feeling of security and belonging to something steady for most of the societies and elites.

The basic stability of the international macro structure was also related to the increasing role of international institutions – the Bretton Woods system, the United Nations and its Security Council, the CSCE and OSCE mechanisms, arms control and trade regimes and, more recently, norms for preserving the environment and for supporting human rights. The most relevant actors – the USSR and the US – never really rocked the boat, at least not beyond a certain extent. At the end of the day, there were two players who had to sort things out – which is what they did.

The New Context of World Politics

Westphalian and Cold War language still dominates most private and public discourses on global and world politics. But it is no longer linked to a context that can sufficiently be described in these terms - because the macro structure has undergone significant changes. The Westphalian system is no longer in place, even when its formal relics are still around. The binary Cold War system has crumbled – or has been overcome.

States and governments do not control most processes of global politics any more. The basic activities are represented and may be described as flows (of capital, communication, entertainment, goods and services, people) rather than as organized exchanges. The container state is still around, but the containers have lost many or most of their black box attributes. National governments can hardly control these flows, at least not on their own.

Moreover, the currency of politics has changed. Military power still matters – sometimes - as has been demonstrated most recently by the US-led campaign against Iraq in 2003 and by the Western-imposed measures against Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Nevertheless, this is hardly the appropriate tool to achieve the main players' goals in global times. The armed forces of the only remaining classical world power, the US, still can – alone or with allies - inflict considerable harm on one or two state adversaries and thereby deny them certain options: Saddam Hussein was forced out of Kuwait and in a second round out of power, similar to Milosevic who was forced out of Kosovo and subsequently out of power. But this is no guarantee for positive solutions, as both cases aptly demonstrate. In the Middle East the U.S. have not been and are not able to dictate anything approaching an acceptable, or imposable, solution. The currency of military power, when applied in a very complex world, cannot produce adequate outcomes.

In this new context, transnational capital flows are more relevant than national budgets, transnational cultural images and discourses are challenging national cultures, strategies of access and denial, of in- and exclusion are more decisive than guarding national borders. In such a new environment, a new cartography of power and access is urgently required in order to overcome the old standards of mapping. New tools for spreading influence and for dominating the nodes of webs and networks are emerging. The nodes and hubs of flows, cascades of power tools, new centralities of patchworks are at least as important as conquering the capitals of states. The old question of Stalin regarding the number of the pope's divisions looks outdated. What matters today is the influence in and over rating agencies, content producers and images.

We can compose a list of six attributes of global politics which are characteristic of the new inter- and transnational context after the Westphalian and the Cold War systems:

The game of global politics is a multilevel game. Relevant actions, interactions, and flows take place and have effects on different levels at the same time: the global, the international, the transnational, the national, the regional, the societal and the individual. This complicates the problem of intentionality. The likelihood of unintended consequences of an action happening on one level is multiplied by the linkages between many levels. Also, the levels can hardly be isolated from one another.

Many more relevant actors are involved in global politics than in international politics at any time before in the last 100, 50 or even 15 years. These actors are related to the spheres of the state; the market; and the social and societal context. Important cleavages are public vs. private, and state vs. non-state. Who are the relevant actors? States still play an important role as regulators, and especially as the target for public expectations. But this role is diminishing and changing. State actors have to locate themselves in a colorful picture containing many other actors. Additionally, there are IOs, international regimes, TNCs, NGOs, regional players (supra- and sub-state), the media, domestic structures and interests, and individuals – from Mr. Bush and Mr. Gates to Mr. Haider and Mr. Atta. Or Mother Theresa.

The relative strength of different groups of players is shifting – depending on the game and on the available hard and soft resources. The decisive **power currencies** of all kinds of actors are much more diverse than the military as the core element of hard power. Asymmetries between the diverse actors can be extreme – the relations between Al Qaeda und the U.S. or between Falun Gong and the Chinese authorities are just two examples.

There are no clearly delineated boundaries between the domestic and the external spheres of politics anymore. The global environment can have a decisive impact on domestic constellations. Domestic structures and coalitions produce significant changes in the transnational landscape. Even rather sophisticated concepts like second image reversed, two-level games and the internationalization of domestic politics look a bit outdated today. To put it bluntly: The problem is not so much one of linkages between the domestic and the international spheres, but rather the vanishing of the markers between those realms.

The nature of interactions is increasingly difficult to monitor, to control and to govern. Diplomats may talk about many things, but their impact on capital markets is limited – to say the least. The impact of satellites transmitting content into different cultural settings can hardly be predicted and is difficult to regulate. Many capital and content flows are difficult to organize and cannot be regulated effectively – at least not by the traditional instruments and strategies inherited from the Westphalian and Cold War settings.

The very concept of regulating and controlling processes and developments is in crisis. Regulation requires a clear conception of the relevant players' interests and resources, viable mechanisms for monitoring, sufficient funding, tools for impacting on the actors involved, providing incentives for relevant actors to accept governance mechanisms, and, first and foremost, it requires concepts as to what should be regulated and in what way. There is much talk about global governance but very limited clarity about how this should be done.

In reality, we have a patchwork of parallel, co-existing and competing norms, tools and systems of governance. The very term "governance" is in crisis. What is needed is fresh thinking about new concepts which are more appropriate for the early 21st century – concepts of moderating and of navigating. To moderate processes does not mean to change their direction but to influence the intensity and the pace of their development. To navigate trends and currents is even less of an 'engineering' concept: here one just tries to move in and between the currents of processes the sources and driving forces of which are beyond anyone's control.

This list gives a brief impression of what is new in global politics, compared to both the Westphalian and the Cold War systems. The new qualities of these attributes have not been designed and did not come to bear in 1989 or 1991, or in 2001. But those years and the events related to them symbolize the changing currents at a deeper level.

My basic prediction is that these new attributes will be present for quite some time - definitely beyond 2010. We should not expect any actor or institution to restore some sort of higher order in the game of global politics. The world is not unilateral or neo-imperial – whatever degree of military power the US may reach. It is, obviously, not a UN-regulated world either. We have to live in, and cope with, this kind of an insecure environment, at least for the coming decades.

The world in the first decade of this century

One cannot address, explain or forecast everything in global politics. Some selection for the readers' and the author's purposes have to be made. In this context, two qualities will be defined as outcomes (dependent variables) which will be explained or predicted. These variables will serve as our main criteria for different scenarios. For the sake of our experiment, we will keep the number of dependent variables small and limit them to just two: **in-/stability** of rule acceptance, and **non-/cooperation** between actors.

This selection may seem traditional and outdated to some readers. I don't think it is: Most people are interested in environments providing exactly these qualities. Without stability, institutions will not work adequately. Without a visible shadow of the future, stability and working institutions cannot be guaranteed. Stability is a requirement for predictability. Those concepts – stability and cooperation - are also well taken as benchmarks for defining relevant outcomes in global politics.

Stability (or the absence of it) is defined as a decisive quality of the global and European landscapes. Stability does not require romantic visions of conflict free zones. It implies the existence of stable and workable institutions (rules) that may be changed in organized ways, at least in core regions.

This presupposes shared basic interests, a strong shadow of the future and relatively long time horizons, the experience and expectation of repeated games, producing effective institutions for sustainable development, effective mechanisms for conflict regulation or resolution, incentives and tools for exchanging goods, services and images, conditions for access to relevant flows and for not too diverse images and identities.

Cooperation (or the absence of it) is the other decisive quality of global and European landscapes. It does not imply complete consent of interests, same-class players or the absence of conflicts. Rather, similar interest patterns are required for rules, time horizons and, consequently, for stability. Additionally, conducive to cooperation are the capacity to address different, and different classes of, actors; linkages between different levels of action (and of analysis); and an interest in the predominance of absolute, not relative gains.

Now we turn to our independent variables (IV) causing variation in the outcomes: structural changes and modifications of the macro configuration characterized by these six new attributes of world politics. They should not be expected to change greatly over the next ten years. The global, then, is conditioned and characterized by these six factors: multilevel games; multitude of actors; shifting strength of actors and type of resources; no markers between the domestic and the global; new quality of interaction – flows; crisis of control concepts.

These factors can be defined as independent variables for determining the future course of world politics. With these factors, we can define a **maximum of six independent variables** possibly causing variation of our two dependent variables, and thereby constituting different scenarios. These scenarios will be defined in the next part of this article. For systematic and for practical reasons, we limit the number of operating IVs to three.

IV 1: Number of relevant levels of political games.

Hypothesis 1 Fewer significant levels generate more stability and more cooperation. It seems difficult to extend institutions effective on one level to other levels.

Theoretical basis: Neoinstitutionalism.

IV 2: Number of relevant actors involved.

Hypothesis 2 Fewer relevant actors produce more stability and cooperation. The greater the number of relevant players, the more difficult to impose authority and to avoid moral hazard and defection problems.

Theoretical basis: Collective action.

IV 3: Relative strength of actors and type of resources.

Hypothesis 3 Combinations of hard and soft resources are conducive to furthering stability and cooperation. Separation of hard and soft resources between different types of actors adversely affect stability and cooperation. Clear signals and credible announcements are important.

Theoretical basis: Rational choice and system theory.

IV 4: Relationship between domestic and global factors.

No hypothesis formulated. The boundaries between domestic and international matters are blurred. No significant variance can be expected.

IV 5: Type of interaction – controlled exchange or flows.

No hypothesis formulated. The number and intensity of flows is likely to be neutral regarding stability and cooperation, or the concept of flows is not compatible with these concepts.

IV 6: Control concepts.

No hypothesis suggested. The concepts of regulation and control are hardly compatible with the other features. Required are ideas of navigating in world politics.

We thus avoid an overly complex setting and produce **three independent variables and three hypotheses** for **two varying outcomes** to be explained.² Each of these scenarios will

² For theoreticians: Obviously, there is not *one* image for events and processes preferred on the dependent side, and also not *one* preferred image on the explaining, independent side. All pure, traditional and current models are left aside (realism, world system) or modified (institutionalism, liberalism/ domestic structures, constructivism). We assume that all actors in all contexts and on every level act first of all to guarantee their survival. Additionally, they try to maximize all other utilities and behave, in this sense, rational (goal oriented). Basic preferences are exogenous, knowledge may be bounded, communication is accepted, learning may take place. These operational principles are assumed to be true for every actor on every level – not just for states.

be developed for nine cases. Those cases are both related to flows and to places and spaces.

Three cases are related to flows, i.e. to rather new, late 20th century forms of interaction.

Capital flows may be found at different levels: regional, national, inter- and transnational, and global. They are formalized or informal. Mostly, they are channeled via commercial and state banks. Yet there are informal mechanisms of transactions of capital as well. The latter seem to gain in importance. Capital flows are the blood circulation of global capitalism.

Content flows are another example of a rather new global phenomenon. Content flows consist of mainly three components: information, communication, and entertainment. Information in digital form is accessible through the world wide web. It has, by now, become the most important source for storing, processing and retrieving knowledge. Almost everything can be found on the internet. Moreover, communication in the form of electronic mail has become the primary form of exchange in the global world. Cell phones are widespread, not only in capitals and cities. Content flows are the brain circuits of post-modernism;

Energy is, besides knowledge, the most important resource of the 21st century. Dependency on energy imports or, conversely, the availability of resources for self-demand or export are decisive factors in Europe's development. Indeed, energy is the fuel of industrial and post-industrial economies.

Four cases represent countries or regional blocs:

The **United States** (US) is sometimes called the only remaining superpower after the end of the Cold War. Others speak of a unilateral world order with one pole – the US. These views are not adequate, at least not sufficient. They are caught up in Westphalian state-level and great power thinking. They overlook how many important debates are taking place in the US, how diverse and heterogeneous this country is, and how limited even US power is when it comes to enforcing political outcomes and implementing political solutions.

The **Russian Federation** (RF) is important, at least for Europe. This is a difficult region, slowly moving toward more internal stability and cooperation. The future development of the RF is of great importance to the prospects of the rest of Europe.

The **European Union** (EU) is the framework for most of Europe located West of the RF. These European countries are either member states, or candidates for this status – including Turkey.

China is the emerging dominant actor in Asia. The importance of China is related to both the number of its inhabitants and, increasingly, its economic dynamism.

Additionally, two non-regional cases will be included.

Regional conflicts have been the single most important source of violent unrest for many decades. They can be framed in ethnic, religious, cultural or other terms.

Structural problems, especially that of widening legitimacy gaps (differentials between representation and effectiveness) in national and global politics. The agencies entitled to do politics are not able to deliver, while those who effectively shape politics are not always democratically legitimized to do so.

3. Scenarios and Cases

I offer three basic scenarios for the European and Eurasian political development up to 2010. This is not the place and the framework for testing all the proposed hypotheses in detail, but I will examine the nine cases in three scenarios regarding two possible outcomes. The differing outcomes are influenced by three independent variables – levels of activity, the number of actors and the type of resources.

Scenario 1: The Coming Anarchy³

| Independent Variables | |
|-----------------------|---|
| | Many or more levels of political action, weakly interconnected. |
| | Many players of different origin and potentials. |
| | Huge variety in terms of resource potentials |
| Values of Outcomes | |
| | Low stability |
| | Low cooperation |

Capital flows

At this point in time - in 2003 - it does not seem likely that effective formal or informal mechanisms for regulating capital flows – from the local to the global level – will be introduced. There are too many actors, levels, forms and statuses involved.

Thus, capital flows, which fuel regional, national and global economies, will continue to be underregulated. Recent cases like the national defaults in Southeast Asia and Russia (1998), Mexico (...) and Argentina (2002) as well as the downturn of the *dotcom*-related sectors of the world economy with all its consequences in 2001 and thereafter, show that capital flows will enhance the risks for stability and cooperation. Although there are positive examples for regulation in certain regions and areas, for example the introduction of the Euro in Western Europe and possibly though not likely, the introduction of a tax for short-term capital transactions, these mechanisms will hardly be extended or implemented effectively. Regulatory mechanisms that do not preclude defection and bypassing are probably more risky in terms of stability and predictability than not having mechanisms in place at all. Accordingly, the partial introduction of some rules in some regions may lead to more instability because the actors in capital markets are uncertain as to which rules are valid or enforceable in what re-

³ This metaphor is borrowed from Robert Kaplan (Kaplan, Robert D. (1994), *The Coming Anarchy. How Scarcity, Crime, Overpopulation, Tribalism, and Disease are Rapidly Destroying the Social Fabric of Our Planet*, in: *Atlantic Monthly*, Feb. 1994, 44-76).

gions. Actors, then, have strong incentives to defect to less regulated markets and regions, in particular offshore regions, or to swerve into informal channels.

Apart from the money transfers through state and commercial banks, there are also informal money flows, like the Hawala, based on informal networks. Hawala-type capital transactions are especially difficult to monitor and regulate and can be expected to increase. Capital flows come in legal as well as in illegal forms. The aggregate amount of money moved across and around the globe is enormous. In sum, increasing capital flows and a less than modest regulation will contribute significantly to economic and political instability.

Energy

High dependency of the European economies on energy imports makes Europe highly contingent on the internal developments in regions which seem increasingly volatile. This is especially true for the Middle East. If the either unstable or authoritarian regimes in countries like Libya, Iraq, Kuwait, and Bahrain fall prey to unorganized regime changes and/ or Islamic populist movements and/or to foreign intervention (in the case of Iraq) energy prices will (at least temporarily) skyrocket and put the European economies on a downward slope – at least in the short term. Russian and Norwegian resources would only partly compensate for that. Energy-saving counter- strategies would be encouraged and developed too late – as usual.

The resulting economic downturn would increase domestic populist sentiments in some European countries. Individual European governments would be tempted to conclude special deals with rogue regimes in energy-rich countries. This may endanger the coherence of the EU. In sum, continued high dependency on energy imports from potentially unstable regions will produce turmoil in Europe once those export regions emerge as conflict areas.

Content flows

Entertainment products like news, movies on video or DVD, TV serials, digitally stored music, and games are being produced worldwide, in Hollywood as well as in India, in Hong Kong and in Russia. They are distributed around the globe via the Internet, on videos, DVDs, CD ROMs, TV sets and via other channels. Contrary to some assumptions, the effect is not homogenization but rather indigenization, leading to mergers of local cultural images with the globally transmitted digital content. This tends to accentuate local and regional diversities. Elite groups will try – and are already doing so - to exploit popular sentiments and exacerbate cultural differences.

Content flows are by nature local, national, regional and global: They are genuinely multilevel phenomena. Actors are manifold. The producers and distributors involved exceed hundreds of thousands, from BBC journalists over film studios to child pornography producers. Their resources are diverse in terms of capital intensity as well as their ability to organize hegemonic images and counter-images. There are hundreds of millions of consumers.

Like capital flows content flows are not effectively regulated. Property rights regimes for content are as underregulated as the transmission of images of sex and violence. Most attempts by national governments to introduce protectionist mechanisms against content flows have failed. In Europe, it is particularly unlikely that regulation, if imposed, could be effective. The role of the Internet and of illegally produced and distributed carriers of digital content is increasing to an extent that the effective regulation of content flows becomes unlikely.

In sum, in Europe and most of Eurasia detrimental effects of content flows may be limited. The cultural background in most European societies is not – at least not yet - heterogeneous enough to serve as a background for manipulating and instigating conflicts, and for social unrest. Nevertheless, there are enough hot spots (Northern Caucasus, the Balkans, Corsica, Northern Ireland, the Basque country, to name just a few) where images generated, reinforced or changed by content flows could produce more instability.

The Role of the US

Evidently, the Bush jr. administration has an increasingly strong antipathy toward building and maintaining international institutions: the ABM treaty, the Kyoto protocol, the steel quotas debate, the International Criminal Court and the Iraq campaign without UN-legitimization are but a few examples.

The US is the most powerful individual actor worldwide. Still, it can neither unilaterally integrate different levels of activity, nor focus successfully on one and ignore the others. It also cannot subordinate all other relevant state, and especially non-state, actors. The US can build and buy coalitions but this is different from cooperation patterns and mechanisms. For the foreseeable future, the willingness of the US to get engaged in European and Eurasian conflicts might be limited. Apparently, so-called terrorist threats are more relevant for the US population, media and decision-makers. Thus, the single most important factor of stability in Europe after 1945 may not be working anymore – at least not automatically.

Consequently, the Europeans have to take care of themselves, also in the realm of (hard) security. A division of labor between a “Hobbesian” US and “an “institutionalized” postmodern Europe is difficult to imagine. So the partial withdrawal (or relocation) of US troops from Europe can contribute to increasing instability and even decreasing cooperation.

The Role of the Russian Federation

Russia is huge and rich in resources. It has nukes and a relatively well educated population. Yet, while the USSR already was an incomplete superpower in the sense that it was similarly (not equally) powerful as the US in terms of military projection capacities although it could never match US economic capabilities and cultural attractiveness, Russia is definitely far away from playing in the same league of state actors as the US. It is still coping with the difficult double challenge of transforming Soviet-style institutions and adapting to globalization.

In terms of resources, there are not too many “hard” assets. Available resources are mainly energy, gold and some arms exports that generate cash income. The brain factor is positive – the educational system is comparatively good. Yet the military sector is not well organized, the armed forces cannot cope with the partly criminal, partly separatist groups in Chechnya and in other places. Parts of the North Caucasus are not effectively organized and controlled by anyone.

Russia is a fine example of a patchwork situation. This means that depending on where we look – at Russia in general, at individual regions or cities, at certain age groups or generational cohorts, at functional elites and ethnic minorities, the impressions are very different. General statements about “Russia” are mostly misleading. In the 1990s, public goods, not provided by the central state any more, were more often than not offered in regional, informal or privatized forms. The enormous multiplicity of actors was – and is - an impediment to any coherent action. There are no identifiable aggregated national interests.

While Russia is internally definitely more consistent now than in the 1990s, it is an open question if, how fast and with what success it will integrate into global mechanisms. Possibly, parts of Russia will or cannot be associated with international regimes or institutions. This would make political perspectives for the rest of Europe appear more cloudy. A stable Russia was and is one of the few classic features of European politics – for good reasons. If the regional and functional contexts of Russia disintegrate, however, Russia will follow suit.

The Role of the European Union

In terms of the consistency of actors, the weakness of the European model (or rather its self-imposed caricature) is apparent. Not only the multitude of national actors (represented in the Councils of Ministers), often taking contradictory positions, but also the diversity of regional actors (organized weakly in the Committee of the Regions) and of the central EU organizations makes it awkward, in many instances, to talk about “Europe”.

The EU's weakness is even more visible when it comes to its role in global politics. With the possible exception of the 2001 EU regulation in Macedonia and the selective retaliation against US import quotas for steel imports in 2002, there is not much that could be presented as a success story for a united Europe shaping global politics – or even European security politics. The flip side of European criticism of US unilateralism is the inability of the Europeans to formulate common positions. This makes Europe vulnerable and ineffective. Dependency on energy imports, migration pressures and other security issues could contribute to an overload of tasks to be addressed by EU agencies and national governments which might produce competition and fragmentation rather than cooperation.

While it does not seem likely that the EU itself disintegrates, it is absolutely conceivable that the pending institutional reforms, the digestion of new members (at least ten) and possible crises in Europe or beyond, prove that the EU is not able to act coherently and as a global actor. The new political modus operandi, shaped by the mass media, permanent election campaigns and ad-hoc styles of political processes, may further weaken the EU's decision-making ability.

The Role of China

The prospects of China's development are uncertain. Robust economic growth rates and WTO membership are among the positive developments. On the other side, however, there are increasing socio-economic differences between the provinces, visible unrest (labor protests and ethnic conflicts) and clearly deficient participation mechanisms. Also, there are attempts to control citizens' access to the WWW.

If Taiwan proceeds with its course of independence, if the further path of the southern provinces (Shanghai, the Pearl Delta including Hong Kong) leads away from the heartland, and if separatist moods take hold in the northern provinces, the coherence of China could be endangered. While the immediate effect of such a development on Europe may be limited, there could be indirect detrimental effects on Europe and especially on Eurasia in the longer run. Separatist and fundamentalist movements in Central Asia and in the Caucasian region would then be almost unavoidable.

Regional Conflicts

Armed conflicts in the Middle East are negative for Europe – no matter what the immediate reasons for the conflict may be. The recent military campaign of a US-led “coalition of the willing” produced not only a Europe in diplomatic disarray. In future, energy prices would

probably be seriously affected, further regime changes could become more likely, and Islamic populist moods among Muslims living in Europe could become activated.

Almost all countries in Central Asia have to strike a difficult balance between modernization pressures and defensive, Islamist reactions and options. This is a delicate situation: while Europe must be ready to condemn authoritarian regimes in the region for principal reasons, there is a risk of fundamentalist regimes, no less authoritarian. destabilization. It is not clear whether the current regimes will be able to steer a course of effective modernization and integration without estranging huge parts of their predominantly young populations.

The appearance of Al Qaida and related movements indicates a broad anti-Western, anti-secular trend in huge parts of the southern world. Islam serves as a handy framework of reference rather than as an instigator among these groups. Unless the countries with significant Islamic populations manage to combine modernity and integration into global developments with at least minimal positive redistributive effects, with access to education and employment for the increasing young population, and with secular interpretations of the core values of the Koran, transnational social conflicts could inflame whole regions.

Moreover, new conflicts in the Balkans would prove that Europe is definitely not able to keep its own house in order.

Structural Problems

It is not a constructive development that in addition to the above mentioned tendencies conducive to a coming anarchy, the European democracies are in danger of an erosion of basic rules of liberal democracies. The most troubling tendency is the weakening of the legitimacy of representative organs. While national governments are legitimized, their range and potentials of political governance are shrinking. At the same time, many actors who are involved in European and global politics are not, or not sufficiently, legitimized – especially the European Commission. But also TNCs and NGOs have limited democratic authority.

In addition, the survival of Western-type societies is questionable. While in a certain sense the world at large has indeed reached the “end of history” insofar as there are no positive alternative visions and world views to global capitalism and formal democracy, there is another potentially gruesome interpretation of this metaphor: fundamentalist opponents of secular, liberal societies are threatening Western-type societies. These prospects are for many still *scifi*-visions. Yet there are sober assessments and expectations indicating that the European-type civil mode of deliberation and operation is in danger. To go further along the path of de-territorialization and decreasing sovereignty – which seems likely, if not unavoidable – could produce an erosion of traditional European societies, a process which is hard to predict, and even harder to accept.

Scenario 2: A Gated Community

| Independent Variables | |
|-----------------------|---|
| | Some levels of political action, partly interconnected. |
| | Many players of different origin and capabilities. |
| | Certain variety in terms of resource potentials. |
| Values of Outcomes | |
| | Selective In/stability |
| | Selective Cooperation |

This scenario does not differ much from the scenario of a coming anarchy in its basic assumptions regarding risks for stability and cooperation. The environment of European countries and societies is becoming much more complex and unpredictable. Yet the assumption here is that it is possible to organize a European core space which is able to more or less preserve basic values and habits of liberal and plural societies – as a gated community.

Capital flows

EU mechanisms may partly be effective in monitoring and regulating or, at least, navigating capital flows. The European Central Bank has earned a solid reputation, and the Euro is performing well after initial problems with credibility. The Euro could continue to rival the USD as an effective world currency. The Euro zone can be strengthened even further by expanding into the Northern and East European regions not yet included.

At the same time, there clearly are limits to enlargement; overstretching and extension must be avoided. The Atlantic ocean, the north of Scandinavia, and the Mediterranean are natural borders of Europe. Turkey may be fortified as an outpost, not a bridge toward Asia. To fulfill the same role would certainly be much more difficult for the Russian Federation. Still, the RF might serve as a buffer. All other problems – defaults by Latin American or South East Asian states, FDI hunger in Africa and other developing macro regions, Hawala – might and will be ignored.

Energy

Dependency on energy imports is a significant risk for Europe. Yet closer cooperation, and integration with Eastern Europe might reduce these risks considerably. Norwegian resources are relevant. Decisive moves toward energy-saving technologies can be negotiated and implemented by a strong European Commission. Still, without imports from the Middle East region, a gated Europe seems hardly conceivable. Yet given the well-known problems of oil exporting countries with collective action, it can be expected that at least some governments defect from OPEC or Arab League decisions to diminish European fuel problems.

Content flows

For content flows, Europe is a primary target. There is too much purchasing power to be ignored or circumvented. Europe also has gained rich experience in absorbing imported con-

tent flows. It can be assumed and arranged that content flows – especially information and communication – will not be disruptive.

The Role of the US

Especially since 2001, the US are perceived in Europe as a state avoiding institutional constraints and trying to unilaterally seek solutions in line with their own interests. But the EU could become more important as an actor if it succeeded to act in a more united way. Perceived common threats to Europe from abroad will help to finally bring about a more effective common or even united foreign and security policy.

It should be realized that in many cases commercial and civil non-state actors do not act according to US interests –not even in the US herself. Counterbalancing on the level of states and state organizations, supranational regimes and networks of non-state actors may effectively neutralize the predominant influence of the United States on hard assets. A common European voice regarding important issues will neutralize U.S: ambitions and potentials.

The Role of the RF

The new Russian leadership (since 2000) is clearly aware of Russia's precarious situation and the competitive context of the global economy. The orientation of Mr. Putin's administration is unequivocal toward integration into global regimes, global markets and European contexts.

The EU can – and should – accept this situation and enhance the Russian tendencies toward integration. A stable Russia east of the EU would greatly improve the stability of a gated Europe.

The Role of the European Union

Europe in the form of the EU is historically and culturally a world power. Economically, it more or less matches the US position.

It has a huge advantage because the principle of subsidiarity, the different layers of policy making mechanisms and of financial budgets and redistribution provisions provide the basis for effectively integrating local, regional (sub state), state and regional (supra state) levels. Cultural diversity is persistent, attractive, and helps to further integration.

The traditional ineptitude and impotence of the EU to act jointly, independently and decisively probably needs significant, even dramatic exogenous impacts. .

When the Europeans finally strengthen EU mechanisms sufficiently to make a common European policy possible in the most important policy fields, Europe could play a much more important role on a global scale, and it could guarantee a prosperous Europe – even when the neighboring regions become more volatile. This requires an effective economic, financial and security policy.

The Role of China

The future role of China – be it a fragmented or a dynamic, integrationist China – would provide solid reasons for making Europe a strong actor on a global scale. This actor would demonstrate its strength by enforcing its borders and not by demonstrating decisiveness and projecting its force abroad. China may become a partner, but mutual dependency will be avoided.

Regional Conflicts

Regional conflicts, permanently transmitted into European living rooms via TV and a long history of failed attempts to stabilize, rebuild and transform failing states finally led to a European consensus on not getting drawn into regional non-European conflicts. While the Balkans have been stabilized by the permanent presence of military units and peace-keeping forces, conflicts in Central Asia, the Trans-Caucasus, the Middle East, South East Asia and Latin America are not a European priority. Some of these conflicts are addressed by the United States, others are glimmering – sometimes intensifying, sometimes receding. Europe is not engaged actively. Russia has problems to insulate herself against notorious instabilities in the northern and Trans-Caucasian regions. The effect is unclear.

The events in Afghanistan and Pakistan after 9/11 and Western involvement in that region have aptly demonstrated that external stabilization in such contexts is only possible when protectorates are established and supported and defended for an undetermined period of time. Obviously, the OECD world is not ready and not able to guarantee this.

Structural Problems

Legitimacy problems may be easier to overcome in gated communities smaller than most nation states, for example in city regions. Democracy could be defined in such a way that participation is linked to certain qualifications and contributions of groups of citizens. For communities bigger than states, legitimacy problems will be bigger, too and may, in fact, seem insurmountable.

Scenario 3: Global Learning

| Independent Variables | |
|-----------------------|---|
| | <p>Many, but limited levels of political action, increasingly connected by institutions, norms, rules and values.</p> <p>Many, but similarly minded players of different origin and potentials, following basic rules of the game.</p> <p>Organic mixture between different types of resources.</p> |
| Values of Outcomes | |
| | Increasing relative stability (medium to long term) |
| | Increasing cooperation (multi-level) |

Capital flows

There are many actors of different types involved – state and non-state, commercial and societal, formal and informal. The resources they have available differ. But even in extreme cases, governments do not seem to be able to effectively control money flows. The same is true for international organizations. While the tools at the disposal of organizations like the IMF and the World Bank are impressive – their influence rests on the nature of credits given

as itinerate games – they cannot by themselves guarantee a consistent and sustainable development of capital flows. Private rating agencies are decisive in narrowing or widening the access of national economies and TNCs to credits on favorable – or not so favorable – terms. Semi- or illegal lenders may resort to force in cases of extended credit terms. Pension and investment funds are among the biggest actors and command impressive weight by fueling and influencing capital flows.

Yet all, or most of these actors may still conclude that under certain conditions it is in their own interest to set a framework of viable rules. These may be preferable to the risks involved in anarchy and gated city or country regions. This scenario implies successful games between different types of actors to produce a degree of trust required for effectively building norms and institutions.

Energy

Europe is not able to produce the amount and quality of energy required for maintaining and increasing its demands for producers and consumers. At the same time, the energy extracting and exporting regions and countries need stable demand.

This mutual dependency may be used for establishing relatively reliable mechanisms for the exchange of energy, with prices floating in an established corridor. If set in a proper way such a price corridor could be useful in two ways: if prices are high enough they set incentives in the importing countries for substituting not renewable energy with new sources. At the same time, prices should be low enough to reduce the structural dependencies of the exporting countries on this sole category of goods and to encourage the development of additional segments of the economy.

The increasingly visible effects of a climate change, even in Central Europe, should help to understand that without decisive measures toward energy producing and consumption patterns based on renewable sources, the whole planet and every country, no matter how rich it may be, are not defensible.

Content flows

How important images are should have become clear at last after Ayatollah Khomeini's media-prepared return to Iran in 1979. The role of the electronic mass media for social and political changes was demonstrated over and over again, including the background, the possible motivation, and the coverage of the events on 9/11 in 2001. The role of CNN and Al Jazeera, the effects of Mexican TV serials in Russia during the 1990s and the coverage of papal visits all over the world are telling examples of the impact of media-transmitted images.

Regulation of these flows is existent. Yet it is not efficient, especially not across national boundaries and on the WWW. When anarchy is not tolerable and when isolated solutions for gated communities do not work, it may be acceptable – as a second-best solution - that there is no other way than to live with these images. The strategy, then, would not be to block and regulate content flows. Rather, children and juveniles would be enabled to live with them in an active way. This strategy seems to be more promising than futile attempts to control what finds its way through different channels anyway.

The Role of the US

The political weight of the US is the strongest in the global world of the early 21st century. When economic and military capacities are mobilized and directed toward a goal supported by a broad consensus in the US, there are hardly any forces in this world to effectively resist

these attempts. At least for the time being. At the same time, commercial and civic non-state actors in the United States are well developed and highly influential. US based TNCs are among the most innovative and profitable worldwide. There are huge numbers of NGOs in the US acting domestically and transnationally and giving society a robust texture.

The significant resource differentials between the US and all other actors and groups of actors usually do not lead to unilaterally defined outcomes. When projecting its unprecedented military power, the US can deny unwelcome outcomes, but they often cannot convert these denial capabilities into positive shaping capacities. Among many examples, the most telling recent cases are the limitations of the US impact in implementing a solution in the Middle East and the problems of nation-building after driving the Taleban out of power in Afghanistan, and Saddam out of office in Iraq. Older examples include the inability to enforce a regime change in Cuba, the disaster in Vietnam or the unsuccessful attempts to pacify the Indian-Pakistan conflict.

The point here is not to unfairly criticize the US for not solving complex problems. The message is that neither hardcore US hawks nor friends of conspiracy theories and master plans all over the world can calmly expect and predict certain outcomes because they are supposedly in the US national interest.

The apparent mismatch between the power concentrated in the US and the limited political impact in terms of addressing and resolving problems has to do with the fact that politics are formed and built at different levels of activity. Certainly, when analyzing the state level, the US are the most powerful state – before the collapse of the USSR, and even more so afterward. The technological finesse and the military capabilities are “second to none”. Yet when it comes to regional trade blocs like NAFTA and the EU, to local affairs like regional conflicts, hostage taking and economic turmoil, and to capital and content flows, the US are influential and important, but by far not the only relevant player in town.

This may lead, over time, to a reassessment of how to best pursue American interests. There are certainly arenas where unilateralism will seem to be the best option – especially when regimes and institutions are either weak, not enforced, or subject to permanent change by majorities of actors not necessarily friendly with US positions. But there are also policy fields which are candidates for regulation by rules. So the United States may act as a benign hegemon in some areas and a rule-observing actor in others. This requires a realistic reassessment of US prospects in the other scenarios – an anarchic environment with basic policy fields unregulated and increasingly out of control, or a political gated communities concept that runs counter to globalization and hardly would enclose all of the heartland US. When, and only when these two options seem unfavorable to most of the domestic US actors, reassessment and learning will take place. Only then, the third option of rules can be implemented.

The Role of the Russian Federation

The preference structure among basic actors in the Russian Federation also matters. That could be seen in the 1990s, when their interests were particularly short-term and volatile. This made Russia a source of instability in Europe and beyond. Yet since about 1999/2000, a new equilibrium among most of the relevant groups of economic and political actors has emerged. Regional and sectoral, federal and local actors have redefined their interests. The resulting new interest structure has produced a different political configuration and has opened new opportunities for strengthening some of the formerly lost state functions.

Still, there is and remains some experience in handling multilevel situations. This was the dominant feature of domestic Russian politics in the 1990s. Also, there has been – and still is – a multitude of actors who act in an underregulated context. This has produced experiences which were later overcome – and which explain the Russian behavior in inter- and transnational contexts since about 2000. As rule-making and observation have grown dominant in the domestic realm, they have also become an organizing principle in international relations. The RF, therefore, should be interested in and able to cooperate in an institutionalized context.

The Role of the European Union

The EU is by definition and in practice an example of institutions (rules). Nation states have agreed to voluntarily transfer sovereignty to regimes in an increasing number of policy fields. In the spheres where institutions are working there are certainly also problems, but they are usually overcome in the framework of those institutions and through negotiations.

The EU as a mechanism is so attractive that more and more countries want to join it. Recently, a new round of negotiations with ten European nations has been concluded. While economic, financial, agricultural, justice and migration policies are more and rather effectively integrated, the foreign and security policy is in disarray, as the Iraq crisis has demonstrated. If a new framework can be worked out is unclear, to say the least.

This is not to imply that the functioning regimes are spotless. The common agricultural policy is effectively a waste of money. Certain other subsidies decrease competitiveness. Innovation, creativity and deregulation are not famous features of the EU. But the successes are more important. There is no prospect of serious conflicts between member states. The Euro is working well – despite some problems after its introduction. The 3% limit on aggregated state debt is meant to serve as a powerful tool against fiscal spending mentalities and produces overall stability (yet there has been some discussion recently about relaxing this provision). In sum, the EU is certainly a powerful voice in favor of regime building.

The Role of China

China's future development is a difficult variable in this scenario. Emerging powers and markets may not easily be ready to accept rules and regimes. At least this will take some time. Currently, the still leading generation of decision makers in China is mostly thinking in terms of geopolitics. Only a new generation with new ways of thinking would be able to join political and economic networks and to formally transfer sovereignty.

Regional Conflicts

It is unrealistic to expect that regional conflicts will disappear. But it should be possible to anticipate regional conflicts, to offer stable counter-incentives against separation and nation building, and regulate more effectively once they erupt. The most important component is an incentive structure for regional and political elites which makes it not profitable to engage in regional separatism and nation building. Another component is the solid expectation that international rules should not legitimize, and the relevant international actors should not accept, such behavior.

Structural Problems

Legitimacy of decision making bodies in a multilevel, multipolar world is hard to achieve. Nevertheless, political processes can be organized by rules. The EU is an example of a complex, institutionalized body which is not sufficiently legitimized. Patchwork-like configura-

tions are even harder to legitimize. But this may create a situation where the payoffs between traditional, formal legitimacy on the one hand, and participation of citizens on different levels depending on their contributions and qualifications on the other hand can be openly discussed.

4. Evaluation

The Coming Anarchy

The prospect of a coming anarchy still seems slightly far fetched - but it can be imagined. As of 2003, there are clear deficits in governance – analytically and practically. Even supposing more external shocks on the scale of 9/11, followed by more radical shifts of perception toward urgent tasks among elites and the public at large, effective learning may be a process too slow for coping with old and new challenges. The old mental maps and behavioral patterns are simple, easy to understand, media-like, compatible with existing mind sets and popular. They can be reinforced rather easily by functional elites and image production by the mass media.

After the end of the East-West Conflict, traditional institutions and organizations in the former Eastern Bloc have disappeared. Other organizations and norms are in trouble as well. The effectiveness and fate of the OSCE are debatable. NATO has simultaneously struggled to digest one round of enlargement when it had to prepare for the second round, to manage institutional reforms and to show that it plays a meaningful role in situations like 9/11.

The economic institutions and organizations – the WTO, World Bank, IMF – are also in a process of redefinition. It seems very difficult to find an adequate mission which can be implemented and serves the interests of over 200 nation states and thousands of TNCs and NGOs.

New exploding regional conflicts, waves of migrants, domestic populist movements, more separatist sentiments in core European states and other, similar developments could lead to a scenario which would be characterized by weak and eroding institutions and rules, by a weakening of EU regimes, by increasing competition between countries and social groups, by enduring social conflicts, ethnic tensions, weakening economies and derailing social cohesions. Still, the likelihood of this scenario seems limited in 2003. Increasing fragmentation of states and state-based institutions and organizations, however, seems unavoidable.

Gated communities

While the first scenario is an option but may not be too likely and certainly not welcome, other options have to be tested and discussed. One possible option is the transfer of the concept of gated communities from domestic contexts to global politics. Europe, or most of it, would be guarded and defended at its external perimeters, or at least around certain core regions. Problems beyond this border would have to be left to themselves.

This could imply first and foremost a stabilization of the OECD world itself, primarily in terms of conflict prevention, financial and trade institutions, common currencies and the regulation of content flows. The next priority has to be the immediate neighborhood where instabilities might occur and lead to consequences in the core region itself: first of all Turkey and Egypt. The US should look after Mexico. It seems likely that Russia would join such an initiative for stability, especially if it proved able to take care of her own borders, and if the European neighbors accepted that – including fortification of her southern borders . This scenario high-

lights two further candidates for closer inspection and protective action – Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

We have to accept that it does not seem viable to stabilize the world with the resources generated by OECD countries (even including Russia and China), and that it is certainly not realistic to create a protectorate in every hot spot of the world. Such an approach is simply not tenable, and it would also encourage local elite groups to provoke such an outcome. This selective approach also suffers from its pragmatism and ethic flaws.

As a second-best option after global learning, it may nevertheless be considered for further reflection. Even if this scenario does not appear realistic or even necessary in 2003, it should not be excluded. Under certain conditions, European actors might reassess their options and decide that their particular interests are better served by decisively enhancing the power of the EU and by limiting the political and security focus of the EU to Europe itself.

Global Learning

This kind of setting can probably only be brought about by one out of two constellations: the appearance of a benign hegemon, or acute catastrophes.

A benign hegemon is not (yet?) in sight. If there was one, he would have to be accompanied by actors realistically calculating their past experiences and their future options. Only a fundamental redefinition of US interests and a large shift in its domestic landscape could bring the world closer to such an outcome. And even then it would not necessarily be a likely outcome.

Catastrophes of a magnitude enabling a fundamental rethinking of mankind can happen. A quick review of the consequences of Chernobyl, the genocide in Rwanda, floods and hurricanes, 9/11 and the like, however, do not give much grounds for optimism.

If the rather formal UN and European parlance of strategies for supporting sustainable development was to become meaningful, it would have to be assisted by new and effective mechanisms of global governance. This outcome does not seem likely. Furthermore, failing states and societies would have to be stabilized and failed communities rebuilt. Kofi Annan and Joseph Fischer are, among others, active proponents of this economic and social anticipatory work.

Yet there is a long way to go toward effective, not just rhetorical good governance. More and stricter standards have to be established for labor and health conditions, the observation of human and minority rights, for the protection of the environment, of natural resources and of children, the enabling of women and young people, against corruption. Such norms unavoidably produce “losers” among those living today. The preferences would have to shift toward the well-being of future generations to make learning real and sustainable.

For researchers a new form and style of mapping are required – a new cartography of places and spaces; a new typology of actors; much more reflection on the consequences of compression of time, on acceleration; on social and cultural reactions toward new opportunities and challenges – from accommodation to resistance, from indigenization to ignorance.

In sum, fresh thinking may have a chance. At this moment it does not seem realistic to expect the transformation of old-fashioned mindsets – learning – at a pace sufficient for a globalizing world with (too?) many dislocations, disjunctures and risks.

At the time of writing, there are at least two major trends. First, the US insistence on going it alone, addressing self-defined rogue states and axes of evil, applying preemptive measures against often weakly proven risks, fighting distant wars with selected allied governments, and leaving subsequent attempts of nation-building to the Europeans. But there is no grand design whatsoever of how to solve basic problems beyond that. While this seems to fit nicely in realist assumptions, it rather shows the importance of domestic factors in global politics.

Second, fundamentalism is a worldwide phenomenon. There are lots of fundamentalisms, but they basically seem to agree that the predominant feature, the model of Western, capitalist and secular development, is evil. For them pluralism is chaos; freedom to select, or combine, lifestyles equals degeneration. Social groups and countries following this seductive path are doomed to fail, or to vanish. Moreover, they are guilty, because they have allegedly caused the defeats and misfortunes in the less developed or isolated regions. Therefore, they may – or must – be attacked in self-defense. With active proponents and representatives of radical fundamentalism, there seems to be almost no ground and room for negotiation. This may imply that fundamentalism has to be defeated - intellectually, socially, and militarily.

In such an environment, and in terms of pragmatic thinking, selective stabilization may be a serious candidate for a new concept. It is narrower and, therefore, more compatible with operational concepts like moderation or navigation – instead of all-encompassing regulation - or with learning, which is so much desired but possibly out of reach.