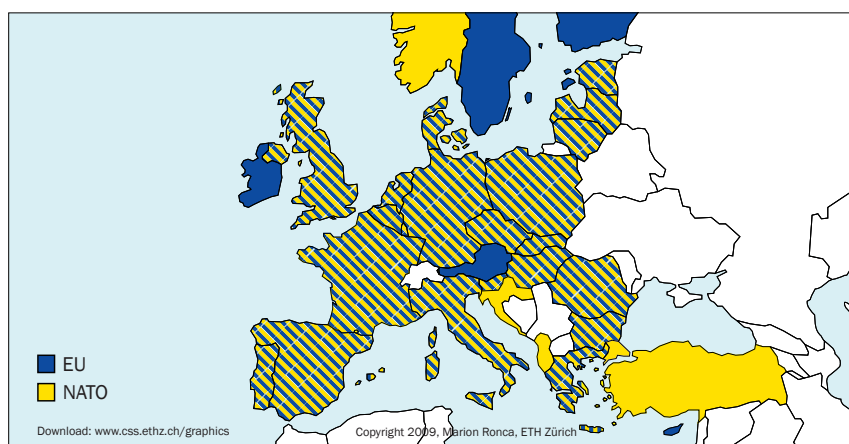


THE SWISS SECURITY POLICY REPORT: KEY POINTS AND DEBATES

The decision of the Federal Council to elaborate a new strategic concept can help to overcome the domestic deadlock of Swiss security policy. In view of the growing complexity and dynamics of the global and regional environment, there are increasingly urgent matters to be debated concerning Switzerland's positioning in terms of foreign and security policy. Coherence between defense, domestic security, and foreign policy as well as participation in international security cooperation have gained importance.



Euro-Atlantic security institutions: Stability in Switzerland's regional environment

In the summer of 2008, the Swiss Federal Council decided to review the country's security policy strategy and to adapt it where necessary. It aims to present a new security policy report to parliament by December 2009, which will be the fourth strategic concept after the reports of 1973, 1990, and 1999 (Report 2000). In the future, it is anticipated that such a strategy review will be held for each legislative period.

There are two reasons why a new report seems necessary. On the one hand, the threat spectrum has widened and partially shifted since 1999, which has also led to change in the demands made of the instruments of security policy. On the other hand, the political dirigibility of Swiss security policy has decreased in recent years. Lengthy and unproductive parliamentary debates on the armed forces are evidence of a previously unknown degree of domestic polarization. Significantly, these discussions have been dominated primarily by details related to structural

and organizational questions that have been placed on the political agenda due to financial constraints.

The mainly reactive nature of the security policy debate is the product of a political system that is shaped, at its top level of leadership, by the principles of multi-party concordance and collegiality, as well as by distinctive features of the political system such as direct democracy, federalism, the firm commitment to neutrality, and the strong militia tradition. In the context of sectoral leadership and administration structures, the comprehensive view of security policy is often neglected amid relations between the government, parliament, the cantons, and the public. The grounding of strategy formulation in a broad public debate, as desired by the Federal Council, is an opportunity to ensure that the formation of political opinion on Switzerland's future security policy alignment becomes an active process. This means that the political class must make renewed efforts to find stable majorities for a security

policy that is commensurate to existing threats and avoid party-political instrumentalization of military affairs.

The 2009 report should not simply become an update of the Report 2000, which is still in effect, but ought to be developed as an entirely new conception. While the Report 2000 made a convincing case for the strategic shift from autonomous territorial defense to the concept of "Security Through Cooperation", it did not establish linkages between either the individual threats or the various instruments of security policy. Against the background of the increasing complexity of security policy challenges, it comes across today as being overly compartmentalized. In the following, some insights for Switzerland's security policy will be deduced from a brief survey of its global and regional environment. This will serve as a basis for discussing the conceptual scope of security policy, important elements of the underlying strategy, implications for planning the necessary security policy capabilities, and the challenges involved in reforming the strategic leadership.

The global context

As a result of globalization, the need for global regulation has increased significantly. In case of failure of such regulatory systems, there may be negative outcomes for international stability and security. This can be seen in three areas: First of all, the financial, energy, and food sectors have proven to be extremely volatile and highly interdependent. Surges and failures of economic growth alter the geopolitical balance of power and influence the course of local and regional conflicts. Secondly, because the infrastructure of globalization is becoming ever more

closely enmeshed, its vulnerability is increased. Disruptions of transport, supply, and communication networks may have security policy implications, as illustrated by the current debates over piracy and the security of information infrastructures. Third, the negative outcomes of non-sustainable exploitation of natural resources for human security are becoming increasingly evident. In this context, issues such as global climate change, water scarcity, or the general increasing incidence of natural hazards are gaining importance in terms of security policy.

The increasing need for global regulation coincides, however, with a decrease in capabilities for global action. During the Bush administration, the US lost some of its influence and ability to assert itself as a regulatory power (*Ordnungsmacht*). Europe's capability to shape the course of affairs beyond a regional level is limited. China and Russia, while they have managed to accumulate a large deal of capital in the course of global shifts of power, remain fragile in terms of their internal stability. Effective coordination between the major powers will become more difficult and will only be achievable on a case-by-case basis in view of growing competition, although the probability of a military conflict between major powers remains very low. The international organizations governing the global financial, trade, and energy systems, which remain largely dominated by the West, are just as much in need of reform as the UN and regional security organizations. The importance and potential of non-state actors, on the other hand, have strongly increased, adding to the growing complexity of the international system.

Globalization, as a factor that is increasingly decisive in determining the structures of international security, can be both conducive and detrimental to stability. It has decisively contributed to the situation today where security is no longer primarily contingent upon geographic proximity and state sovereignty. At the same time, the spectrum of threats has become more broad and diffuse, which in turn has made developments in security policy less predictable.

We may draw four implications for Switzerland from these global developments. First of all, it will become more difficult for the country to position itself in foreign policy, in view of the tension between its competing identities as a neutral small state, a

part of the West, and a global finance hub. Secondly, the integration of defense, domestic security, foreign policy, and foreign trade policy within a comprehensive approach across departmental portfolios will become increasingly important. Third, resilience and regenerative capability in case of disruptions in the globalization infrastructure is becoming crucial. Fourth, the qualities of awareness, anticipation, and ability to respond in a confusing and unpredictable global environment constitute core capabilities for security policy.

Stable core, fragile periphery

The regional security environment of Switzerland is characterized by strategic stability at the heart of Europe and numerous crises on the periphery of the continent. The most immediate dangers for the European states arise from the combination of weak states and global security risks emanating from an arc of crisis that reaches from Africa across the Middle East, the Caucasus, and Central Asia to Southwest Asia. This zone of instability is dominated by domestic conflicts arising from multiple political, social, and economic weaknesses. Political fragmentation and economic marginalization make these societies particularly vulnerable to climate change or scarcity of water and food. At the same time, transnational violence that is often directed outwards in the shape of global security

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risks such as extremism, organized crime, terrorism, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is frequently superimposed

upon these domestic conflicts. These usually non-military reverberations of crisis hotspots, which are often geographically distant, are core contemporary challenges for the domestic and external security of the European states.

In view of this threat picture, the security of the European states today depends to a large degree on the efficiency and effectiveness of inter-state collaboration at the bilateral and multilateral levels. The European security structures have undergone dynamic transformations in recent years: The stable core of Europe has been significantly broadened geographically with the eastwards expansion of the EU and NATO. EU justice and police cooperation in domestic security has also increased strongly. Furthermore, the European states are making enhanced efforts within the framework of European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) to formulate a common strategy and

doctrine and to develop civilian and military capabilities. Finally, they are also increasing their participation in international stabilization operations conducted by the EU, NATO, and the UN.

The first implication of these regional developments for Switzerland is that war in Europe and a conventional threat to the state have become extremely unlikely. Secondly, this begs the question of how Switzerland will position itself in terms of security policy within the European regional context. Third, sufficient attention must be given to the protection and maintenance of the operational capability of society and state in view of the abovementioned non-military threats to domestic security. Fourth, and ancillary to the above, a civil-military approach to local prevention and handling of crises has become more important.

Conceptual reach

Security policy deals with prevention of, defense against, or management of the use or threat of organized violence on a strategic scale that threatens the national interests of Switzerland and in particular the security of its population and the foundations of its livelihood. As a cross-section policy and composite task, it involves approaches to coping with existential hazards and disruptions of domestic security as well as prevention and stabilization of international crises and conflicts that affect the security of Switzerland.

The definition of violence used in the Report 2000 continues to be practical. An overly broad conceptual expansion of security policy makes it difficult to assign clear roles and areas of responsibility to the various policy instruments. Challenges such as climate change and the security of energy supplies are related to security policy to the extent that they affect instances of political violence; essentially, however, they are part of other policy fields. However, the overlaps between security policy and other policy fields are increasing due to the topical and geographic expansion of the threat spectrum. For example, a pandemic may require the deployment of security policy capabilities. Conversely, the resilience of the health system has security policy implications. It is also worth noting that the boundaries between exceptional security measures and the everyday political activities of the state are becoming blurred. For instance, the protection of critical information infrastructures depends to a large degree on the way in which the state regulates the market.

Coherence in policy formulation

Two central paradigms suggest themselves in the formulation of Swiss strategy: Coherence in the formulation of policy and cooperation in the implementation of policy are becoming key challenges in the efficient production of security. Both paradigms are based on the growing complexity and dynamics of Switzerland's environment, factors that have contributed to a situation where the traditional threefold distinction between domestic and external security, between military and civilian instruments, and between state and non-state actors must increasingly be put into perspective.

A coherent security strategy today demands a comprehensive approach that can integrate, at the political-strategic level, the policy fields of domestic and external security, as well as civilian and military capabilities respectively, which have hitherto been handled by different actors using independent means. In ensuring coherence between defense, internal security, and foreign policy, this comes under the responsibility of the Federal Council as a collegiate body, with a central role for the strategic process (*Strategische Führung*). The systems of domestic and foreign policy have so far been largely developed separately in Switzerland – even though there have been notable cooperation efforts at the operative level between the intelligence services, between the police/cantonal authorities and the armed forces/federal authorities, and between civilian and military peace support efforts. The difficulties associated with the implementation of a strategic crisis organization, the remaining gaps in security police capabilities, and the disparity between civilian and military peace support are, inter alia, manifestations of the lack of integration between the abovementioned policy fields at the political-strategic level.

Another question that remains unresolved to date is the relationship between the foreign and security policy reports of the Swiss government. Also important is the discussion on the competing international role conceptions of Switzerland, which come to the fore particularly in the continuing battle over the meaning of neutrality. From a security policy point of view, three considerations are essential here: First of all, in view of the changing international environment and the current threat picture, neutrality has lost large parts of its security function. However, it still enjoys a great deal of domestic approval and constitutes an indispensable part of Switzerland's self-image.

Secondly, neutrality can be an asset for the foreign ministry to conduct an active policy of dialog and mediation in international crises, but the resulting distancing of Switzerland from the Euro-Atlantic security institutions raises the fundamental question of which international role is most suitable for the preservation of the country's national interests. Third, it is essential to underline that neutrality is no obstacle to comprehensive security policy cooperation. Only actual NATO membership would be a violation of the neutrality principle, yet such a step is unnecessary in terms of security policy and lacks majority support at the domestic level.

Cooperation in policy implementation

The cooperation paradigm in national and international policy implementation, which is at the center of the Report 2000, remains unchanged as an indispensable element. However, implementation of the cooperative approach has been inconsistent so far, as there was a lopsided focus on national collaboration. While at the international level, judicial and police cooperation as well as collaboration with other intelligence services was intensified, cooperation at the military level remained modest.

In the matter of security cooperation at the national level, open questions remain regarding the role of the armed forces and the demarcation of their role vis-à-vis the police. There is also a need for clarification over the integration of the cantons into the federal strategic crisis organization as well as the involvement of the private sector in the protection of the national infrastructure systems.

Action is also required in the area of international cooperation. First of all, there is an urgent need to clarify the country's stance towards the rapidly evolving ESDP. On the one hand, it will be crucial to determine which advantages a non-member state can derive from European armaments and defense cooperation for long-term planning regarding its armed forces, and in which areas the Swiss army depends on third-party capabilities. On the other hand, Switzerland needs to specify the civilian and military capabilities that it wants to contribute to European security production. Secondly, there is a requirement to clarify the fundamentals of a comprehensive civil-military peace support strategy that defines contributions to security, stability, and development on the ground as mutually contingent elements of a value-added chain. Here, it is advisable to

make a transition from the current approach of ad-hoc cooperation, defined between the portfolios concerned on a case-by-case basis, to a comprehensive strategy for peace support. To specify the geographic sphere of interest and partners for cooperation in this context would unnecessarily limit the Federal Council's freedom of action.

Enhancing the status of foreign policy

Since Switzerland's first security policy strategy was formulated in the early 1970s, the importance of foreign policy within the overall concept has steadily increased. This trend has even accelerated in recent years against the background of the changing nature of conflict and the experiences gained in international crisis management. In addition to its contribution to the coherent implementation of Swiss security strategy and to the strengthening of anticipatory and reactive capabilities, the country's foreign policy makes increasingly important contributions to sustainable peace promotion through its engagement in disarmament and arms control policy as well as the advancement of international humanitarian law, among other things.

The civilian tools for conflict prevention and management have become key factors in effective crisis management. Switzerland has a great deal of competence and resources at its disposal in the fields of humanitarian aid, mediation, and development cooperation. When it comes to immediate conflict prevention and the implementation of peace treaties, on the other hand, it only has few specific instruments at its disposal. It would appear worthwhile to consider expanding the civilian instruments in this area in the interest of creating a comprehensive value-added chain. This issue is also linked to the growing requirement for coordination within the Foreign Ministry (development agency DEZA – Political Affairs Division IV) and between the Foreign and Defense Ministries.

Controversy over the role of the armed forces

Since the demise of the basic consensus on security policy in Switzerland in the late 1980s, the role and shape of the armed forces have been a matter of great controversy. The political debates are concentrated both on the substance of the armed forces' mission (area protection and defense, subsidiary operations, international peace support) and on the respective importance allocated to these.

The shift in emphasis undertaken as part of the 08/11 development step from defense forces to security forces has met the opposition of the national-conservative camp. Their security concept, which is geared towards autonomous national defense, is no longer plausible though in view of the current threat situation. However, the stronger focus on area defense operations also brings some problems with it. Scenarios based on far-reaching and long-term high-intensity destabilization, which might require a transition from subsidiary operations for the prevention and management of existential dangers to actual military-dominated area defense, are not very likely to occur in Switzerland under current conditions. Furthermore, significant additional efforts are required to arrive at an understanding of area defense and the respective roles of the military and the police that is shared both within the armed forces and among military and civilian actors, respectively.

In the context of subsidiary support for the civilian agencies, there has been a significant reduction of friction areas between the armed forces and the police, thanks to a shared platform of the Defense Ministry, the Federal Department of Justice and Police, and the conference of cantonal department chiefs of justice and police departments. Operations in this area also enjoy high approval rates among the public. However, they only constitute a limited task for the armed forces, all the more so since domestic security will continue to be primarily a police mission in the future.

International peace support, on the other hand, which as part of an expanded defense concept has become the main focus of most national armies in Europe, remains controversial in Switzerland. The problems associated with this reticence even towards a modest expansion of military contributions need to be discussed in the new report.

Capabilities-oriented steering

Political steering of the armed forces by way of finances has become increasingly difficult in recent years due to polarization at the domestic policy level. The three legally mandated tasks of the armed forces, on the other hand, are general and timeless and do not contain detailed weighting of mission areas. Therefore, they are not helpful in overcoming the political deadlock surrounding the steering of the armed forces' activities.

Such control could be made more efficient through a capabilities-oriented approach. This means identifying key capabilities that the military can contribute to the overall array of security capabilities, independently of the type of operation in which they are brought to bear. Steering based on capabilities would also do justice to the circumstance that, due to the broader and more complex threat picture, the armed forces have developed into a multipurpose instrument. While on the one hand, the military represents a strategic reserve with a long-term orientation that strengthens the sovereignty of Switzerland and its combat-readiness within the European context, it also contributes operationally to the creation of national and international security through its specific capabilities in the areas of anticipation/reaction, protection, and prevention, in close cooperation with partners.

In the future development of the armed forces, it is important to bear in mind that the current organization of the military is likely to come under further pressure due to socio-political and economic trends. Furthermore, the demographic development will necessitate a reduction of manpower in the middle term. The trend towards reduction of available resources seems largely irreversible and demands that issues surrounding the system of national service be considered dispassionately. This is true both for the size and structure of the army and for aspects of the service model and of officers' careers.

Strategic leadership

Finally, the new security policy report will also have to include guidelines on the strategic leadership. Since the abolition of the comprehensive defense model in 1999, the strategic leadership system of Switzerland has been under reconstruction. Two different approaches have been taken in this context: On the one hand, Switzerland aims to achieve process-oriented coordination through the Security Committee (SiA) of the Federal Council as well as the Security Steering Group and the SiA staff unit as supporting bodies. However, the effectiveness of this approach has proven to be limited since most of the various ministries have crisis management bodies of their own and are strongly independent, and because the Steering Group and the SiA staff unit have no independent leadership and decisionmaking competence.

On the other hand, the debate over the shape of strategic leadership in Switzerland has occasionally displayed an institutional approach, too. However, this has only been realized in piecemeal fashion. For instance, the two new civilian intelligence agencies are now located within the Defense Ministry. Nevertheless, it was decided that they should not be fully combined institutionally into a single intelligence service. Furthermore, there proved to be insufficient support for bringing together the military and the police under a single Security Ministry. On the other hand, the authority of the head of the Defense Ministry to ensure comprehensive coordination of security policy, in cooperation with the federal offices and cantons concerned, does imply an institutional leadership role for the Defense Ministry, at least with a view to internal coherence.

The process of reforming the strategic leadership is obviously still underway. It will be necessary, as part of an overarching concept, to examine various options for closer involvement of the cantons in strategic crisis management, as well as the integration of the private sector in the protection of critical infrastructures. There is also a need for action concerning strategic coordination of risk analysis and scenario work among the various federal authorities and concerning the adaptation of crisis communication tools. Finally, there is a need to clarify requirements for additional capabilities in the area of reconnaissance and anticipation, the role of which has, for example, been markedly upgraded in the latest security strategy of France and which is gaining increasing importance in Switzerland as well in view of the diffuse threat picture and the tendency towards ever shorter early-warning periods.

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