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TOWARDS EUROPE 2035 – IN SEARCH OF THE ARCHIMEDEAN SCREW: FOCUS IN PERSPECTIVE

Uwe NERLICH

Abstract: Approaches and results from the FOCUS project centred on the planning of security research in the 2035 time frame to support foresighted EU security missions. In a follow-up, they could be carried further to help provide a framework for analyzing long-term trends and dynamic interactions in a global environment undergoing tectonic changes, reaching beyond the FOCUS mission to explore new contexts of civil security research in support of possible future EU mission scenarios. European developments are in large part driven by challenging global developments, reaching beyond external risks and threats to which the EU needs to respond. This article thus explores the complementarity of the FOCUS framework and the concurrent fifth NIC Report “Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds” of the US National Intelligence Council (NIC) in search of a framework for assessing the impact of global dynamics on the inner dynamics of global players, with the EU as a special case.

Keywords: Security foresight, alternative futures, context scenarios, global trends, peer countries, institutional Europe.

Traveller, there are no roads. The roads are made by walking.

Spanish Proverb

FOCUS: Scope and Objectives

Foresighting has increasingly become an integral part of how many governmental organisations and international institutions address future choices of policies and capabilities. Implementation of foresight results has remained organization-specific and related to internal processes. It is also directed towards specific sets of issues like technologies, production-lines, markets and other applications. Foresight can be employed to broaden the mindset of specific problem-oriented communities and to change standard ways of looking at a range of issues, choices, etc. It can serve to develop alternative strategic orientations. It can help enhancing methodologies to be

applied to organization-relevant sets of future-related issues. Foresight can also be used to develop frameworks for how to think about future choices with a degree of coherence. It can be broadened to fuel the evolution of new problem-solving cultures.

Foresight is not a fixed and formal approach but does require some understanding of the driving organisation and its identity. Foresighting requires a process with recurring assessments – a *strategic conversation*, as Peter Schwartz, one of the initiators of this kind of approach, has labelled it. It thus succeeds only through participatory work. And above all, it should be geared towards a purpose and a related range of applications that are critically relevant for the organisation using it. The more it has been practiced with respective organisational and social learning, the wider the problem communities may be for effectively using it.

Within the EU, foresighting has come to be used both by the Council (its Forward Unit in case of the European Futures 2010 Project) and within the Commission in pursuit of the Lisbon goals, in particular for technology assessments. In view of changing challenges and opportunities, its scope has broadened to facilitate choices between policy options and even to shape long-term policies and activities.

At the request of various Directorates Generals within the Commission, the European Commission's Joint Research Center's (JRC) Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS) was tasked to develop foresighting as an instrument for policy making. This led to combined efforts towards qualitative foresighting and quantitative modelling.

The FOCUS approach is in line with these developments. At the same time, it is special and innovative because it is organization-specific, geared towards the evolution of the EU of today as defined through the Lisbon Treaty into a comprehensive security provider of the future. FOCUS has a wide time-horizon (2035), yet without assuming dominant megatrends. The project it is designed to provide tools for planning EU security research in support of future policy making needs in response to external developments that challenge the internal security of the EU and its citizens. As any foresight, this requires—and puts into action—a diverse participatory process. In its further use beyond the immediate scope of the project, also a model for the eventual application of FOCUS tools and prospective future research to future policy choices will be required.

This needs reflection on future states of development within a framework that is consistent with the organizational identity assumed, in this case institutional Europe. Given Europe's complexity and dynamics as a dual system, longer-term take-up of FOCUS results for purposes beyond the projects immediate scope—the planning for future security research—will depend on the impact that future applications of FOCUS-inspired research outcomes will have on the EU development, which itself is

most likely to undergo structural changes within a 2035 time-frame. As addressed in FOCUS, this may change the nature of required or desirable supportive research.

FOCUS is designed to support European security research planning. This article seeks to contribute to the development of a framework for assessing possible relevance of post-FOCUS research and of application of the FOCUS tools to problem solving prior to outcomes of FOCUS-informed research planning.

The project faces a threefold challenge: to foresight concurrently the EU system, the global system and the EU roles resulting from both.¹ No model exists to analyse the interactions between these, let alone to do so in a 2035 time-frame. The project is designed to develop a research agenda.

The approach chosen follows five key topics (“Big Themes”):

- to cope with environmental change and natural disasters (1)
- to protect critical infrastructures and supply chains (2)
- to provide security against terrorism and through global missions (3)
- to ensure a comprehensive approach in the pursuit of these goals (4)
- to enhance the EU internal framework for EU homeland security (5).

The first three relate to challenges, the latter two – to basic requirements (see Figure 1). Unlike strategic foresighting like in the Atlantic Councils’ “Strategic Foresighting Initiative,” the “Big Themes” do not represent by themselves dominant long-term trends but relate to issue areas that will see long-term developments which will be steered in part by mindsets of organisations/actors in charge and which security research is expected to improve with support from FOCUS. The Big Themes thus need to be reflective of long-term trends, albeit without stating them a priori.

This approach is focused on institutional Europe as a central unit. The 2035 time-frame allows for changing boundary conditions. Global changes are assumed *en lieu* continuing globalization of opportunities and risks.

The accelerating pace of changes within both the EU and the global environment complicates this task since the EU agenda is bound to affect the course of this academic endeavour. However, to ensure relevance of future security research, it should be evaluated also in the context of foreseeable policy choices—both current and long-term—that are assumed to be supported by future security research.

FOCUS is offering European alternatives in a 2035 time-frame that have resulted from an elaborative process and circumscribe the range of what future security research is meant to be oriented toward. The methodological orientation should, in FOCUS follow-up work, not preclude considering its relevance for ongoing European

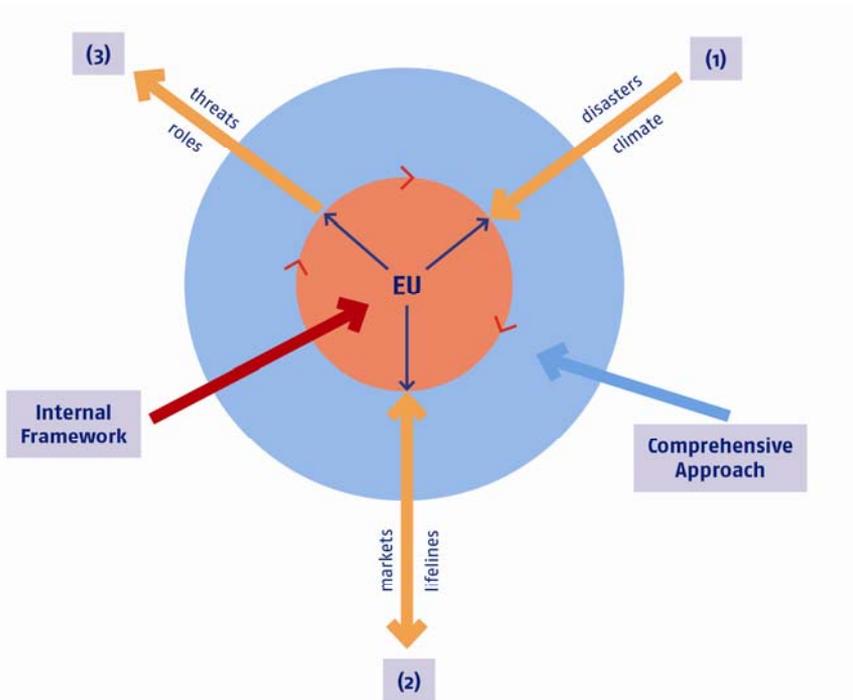


Figure 1: FOCUS “Big Themes” – Challenges and Requirements.

decision making that could well disrupt or drive European developments outside the scope of the futures stipulated by the FOCUS project.

FOCUS centres on European futures, but the result is a tool to guide or enhance future security research on the European Union and to do so in support of future policy making with regard to the further evolution of the EU, including evolution of the external dimensions of its security and the range of future roles of the EU as a global security provider. This happens at a point in time when Europe finds itself amidst increasingly existential internal controversies and increasingly indisputable and incalculable rankings by other global players.

Planning research on EU security could at best bear fruit under the new Horizon 2020 Program, and given the likely incubation period for complex conceptual constructs, this could well take into the 2020s.

It is no impatience to consider the chances for FOCUS to exert influence on the current debates over Europe’s future course. At this stage it seems worth considering whether and in what ways the project’s findings could inform current discourses and

controversies over how to resolve the structural deficiencies as displayed by the debt crisis and to do so in a sustainable manner and thus in a long-term perspective.

The FOCUS project could be seen to exert some kind of special role among the security research projects under the 7th Framework Program for Research² in that it considers the EU at large and its futures in a long-term perspective. It is thus inherently related to central policy developments, even if the methodological restriction is observed throughout, as indeed it is.

The pace-setting Report of the European Security Research and Innovation Form (ESRIF) has pointed out the special role of foresighting for European Security Research (ESR), but it cautions that “methodological advances require input from real problems to be sound.”³ In this vein, the ESRIF Report laid out four context scenarios that had guided the ESRIF effort: “Global Governance,” “Multi-polar Realism,” “New Welfare for all” and “The West between Threat and Attractions.” Global politics was chosen as the first scenario dimension.⁴

The Background: The Lisbon Strategy

This approach reflects the course of the EU’s development throughout the first decade of the century. In 2000 the EU sought to enhance its global economic and technological competitiveness through its Lisbon strategy to counter the increasing challenges of globalization. It discovered at long last President Clinton’s “It’s the economy, stupid.” The strategy was designed to make Europe through collective efforts by 2010 “the most competitive and the most dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world.”⁵

By 2005 the EU Council still declared that sustainable growth and employment are Europe’s most pressing goals.⁶ This made good sense. For example, China’s national strategy followed the same priorities. And the United States, after living for decades on the basis of its economic strength, is just rediscovering it.⁷ However, by 2005 the Lisbon strategy needed to be revised since all goals had been missed. Instead of a collective EU effort, the Lisbon goals now were to be attained individually by the EU Member States.

Concurrently, the external dimensions of security were increasingly recognized. So was the opportunity to cooperate on security within the EU’s institutional framework.

The plausible by-product was the initiation of the EU’s security research program under the FP 7, i.e. while the EU’s growth strategy got increasingly renationalized, there were beginnings of a common security strategy, to be reinforced by the evolving European security research program.⁸ Security and defence were understood as (1) protection of citizens against terrorism and through strengthening their resilience, and

(2) security services on the part of the EU as foreseen by widened Petersberg missions. But it did not need the Libyan intervention to see that European efforts had largely failed to enhance the EU's capabilities and freedom to act.

The Treaty of Lisbon (2008) was seen to provide an institutional framework for further EU evolution to be supported by the security research program. But by 2010 the context for European security research and, in fact, more generally, the conditions for the EU's global strategy were changing profoundly:

- The debt crisis has demonstrated both Europe's economic vulnerability and the need to develop further the EU's governance at a stage where signs of disintegration appeared in several dimensions (currency, social cohesion, North-South fault-lines, regional fragmentation).
- With export continuing as the backbone of European economy, Europe's dependence on external circumstances beyond its sufficient control is increasing with regard to energy, rare earth and other materials and rapidly increasing indigenous capacities in countries, with China on top, into which major portions of European exports are currently going.
- The knowledge base of European economic strength is losing ground to main competitors, thus weakening further in an increasingly competitive global environment.
- This deteriorating eco-strategic situation is increasingly exacerbated by a strategic competitiveness over resources, in view of increasingly exposed and vulnerable sea lines of communication (SLOCs) and other ways of supply, and even by military dimensions of major power relations.
- A small intervention like the one in 2011 in Libya has demonstrated Europe's continued dependence on critical US assets and capabilities even in case of US determination to "lead from behind." The EU can no longer afford to be confined to its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and specialize in certain military services under limited mandates if Europe is to be accepted as a global security player. It will be increasingly seen by peer countries as marginalized if an annual collective spending of some \$ 300 billion continues to fail buying strategic freedom to act. Moreover, reliance on the US can no longer be taken for granted. In fact, many signals point to the opposite direction.

This European predicament certainly does not rule out reversals, but reversing this ongoing decline—seen within the 2030 time-frame—would require strong efforts on the part of capable European nations and a willingness to carry the EU at large. However, the prevailing views in Washington, Beijing, New Delhi and elsewhere are that the only way for Europe to sustain stability, welfare and eventually security is that the

current disarray and downward trends are turned around. Current trends suggest the opposite.

The Lisbon strategy has failed: Economic strength cannot be expected to be generated merely through forging collective efforts.⁹ Yet the primacy of strengthening Europe's knowledge base is more pertinent than at the time of the initiation of the Lisbon strategy. However, the boundary conditions have clearly deteriorated – not only because Europe is falling behind, but because its economy is increasingly becoming hostage to a volatile global political and geostrategic environment.

Europe is thus facing a dual challenge – in terms of both economic competitiveness and exposure to changing strategic conditions that threaten to impact European stability and wellspring. It is facing closely interconnected inner and global challenges. Amidst the current crisis that tends to affect Europe's global competitiveness and its inner cohesion and growth potential, Europe can be seen to lack both a global strategy beyond its model of cooperativeness and a strategy for inner growth and stability beyond progressive framing of its institutional structure.

This current European debate is focused on short-term solutions for the debt crisis within an institutional structure that foreseeably will neither provide sufficient governance for economic revival nor for regaining global weight.

Short-term Solutions in Long-term Perspective

Europe's current crisis is thus different from what European governments have traditionally faced since the community's early stages: Today's governments face choices between imposing short-term solutions on their electorates that threaten to jeopardize the very foundation of the Union and accommodating to domestic pressures that tend to accept forms of European disintegration and regression through withdrawal from community structures, regional prioritizing, political risk-taking, hope for support from third parties or simply lack of perspectives.

While this suggest degrees of renationalization in Europe, political audiences in the United States, in China, in Russia and in emerging regions largely agree that ultimately the EU will be able to sustain on a global scale only as an entity, and, worse than that, the assessment among today's global players is increasingly that "in global terms, the European continent is in relative decline, geopolitically as well as economically."¹⁰

There certainly do, in fact, exist political trends in Europe to seek revival in terms of single-handed national ambitions. But both the legacies of the last European war as well as the transfers of sovereignties hardly leave the chance even for the major European nations to ever return to and rely on what in the past had been understood

as the *raison d'être* of national states – i.e. organic structures, that survive for as long as they possess some growth potential and follow a *raison d'être* that points the ways and aims for this growth, though without being deprived of choices nor driven by necessity.¹¹ A low EU profile in an increasingly competitive global environment will eventually undermine Europe's economic foundations. And relying merely on institutionalized Europe as its collective identity will not prevent the continuing marginalization of Europe either. In fact, either way, political decline and disintegration threaten to be followed by jeopardizing social cohesion.

Such a predicament requires more political creative power than was at work at previous thresholds. More than progressive framing will be needed. In fact, solving pressing political crises may require what systems theory, e.g. in terms of Niklas Luhmann, has suggested: that complex current problems may find easier solutions in a long-term perspective, except that the long-term perspective is both missing and in the centre of controversy.

Unlike the United States that are just leaving a decline debate behind and—unprecedented internal tensions and needs for reconstruction notwithstanding—once again are discovering the “genius of American politics”¹² and unlike China that is rediscovering its felt vocation as the “Middle Kingdom”¹³ and even unlike Russia that has begun to redefine its future by turning to historical roots, Europe's nations dangle between memories of a past that is unlikely to lead anywhere and futures they find increasingly difficult to reconcile and translate into some collective identity. Yet exactly this—a growing understanding of a collective European identity shared by a majority of its more than 500 million citizens—is the only hope there is in view of internal ongoing friction and alienation, a neighbourhood that is driven by youth and poverty, a dependence on raw material and energy that tends to shift productivity elsewhere, thus reducing export capacities as the economic base of Europe's welfare, and exposing Europe's nations to the competitive, if not coercive leverage of global players.

A strong knowledge base is the pivotal strength needed to carry into a European future with stability and some prosperity. But in unprecedented ways this will require a future-orientation of European nations that is hardly reflected in debates on the present crisis. Narrowing these fateful debates to Europe's institutional state of affairs and its scope for progressing beyond the Lisbon Treaty will not allow to construct Europe's future roles and standing amidst the evolving global political economic and strategic environment.

It is essential to assess the conditions and the possible inner dynamics of Europe. But given that Europe is above all challenged by global developments—not just threats, but global tectonic changes that already impact severely on today's Europe—it is

equally essential to look from the outside and to do so both in terms of other central units in the international system and of the dynamics of global changes in the course of the coming decades, like in the 2035 time-frame.

Two EU Initiatives

Two recent political efforts initiated from Brussels reinforce this assessment. As President Herman van Rompuy has stressed in his Report on the Future of the Economics and Currency Union, the current crisis is exacerbated by the structural deficiencies of the EU's institutional framework.¹⁴ The Report called for an approach and a vision intended to match the long-term challenges the Union is facing. But it was confined to four building blocks: an integrated financial framework, an integrated budget framework, an integrated economic policy-framework and ensured democratic legitimacy – indeed four demanding challenges. It did not contain, though, a solution for the pressing current problems nor a structural proposal for resolving existing structural deficiencies, nor indeed a plan for arriving at a constructive constitutional debate. Not surprisingly, the President's initiative fell flat both on the ground of missing proposals for short-term solutions and of the burden of engaging at this stage in dialogues on end-games. Yet eventually solutions to currently pressing issues will need to at least not foreclose options for long-term structural solutions, but to be conducive to their eventual attainment.

One reason for this shortcoming was that the member state most pivotal in solving the debt crisis—Germany—is on record as the trailblazer for the EU's institutional evolution, but turned down the President's "vision" because it was seen as a gamble in favour of a short-term solution that Germany would not accept. What is worth mentioning here is that current structural problems do indeed require a long-term perspective, but as of now there does not exist an agreeable concept for linking current solutions to long-term structural change, even though the political debate increasingly exposes this crucial lacuna. President Rompuy invoked Jean Monnet instead: "The EU is only a stage on the way to the organized world of the future." And Europe would help the world come together. Yet this invocation tends to add resignation to inapt authority.

In a concurrent effort the foreign ministers from the six founding EU members plus Austria, Denmark, Poland, Portugal and Spain convened in five meetings as a "Future of Europe-Group" to also address both the debt crisis and the challenges deriving from an ever accelerating process of globalization and the repercussions on Europe in a more "polycentric world."¹⁵

Their report had merits in that it stressed the need "to make the EU into a real actor on the global scene" and that this would require in the long term to strengthen the

CSDP: “Our defence policy should have more ambitious goals that go beyond sharing and pooling. Relations with strategic partners should become more effective.” Council consultations should be made more strategic and focused. The EU should aim at reviewing the “European Security Strategy.” The “EU needs to fundamentally reinforce the Common Security and Defence Policy and shape relations with strategic partners more effectively.” However, there is no reference to the nature of future challenges and the changing global context nor to the development of future coordinated approaches of EU members to make Europe into “a real actor on the global scene.” The report does not go beyond some general observations on required long-term governance structure and the overall functioning of the EU.

The tectonic changes and the increasing competitiveness within the global environment will need to drive the inner development of the EU. But this report too leaves the pivotal issue of how to relate short-term solutions to the EU’s long-term aims unanswered nor does it recognize that in the end the report is confined to the EU’s institutional framework plus its allowance for eventual treaty changes, however difficult to be achieved with 28 or more member states.

As an insightful observer has stated, the structures resulting from the Lisbon Treaty “are only a necessary, but still insufficient condition for a more effective external action of the EU.” The real test “will probably come from outside the Union,” in fact not unlike most past watersheds in the EU’s evolution. While the framing process of the EU is difficult to assess, it will “not occur in a vacuum: it will be significantly influenced and shaped by external challenges.”¹⁶

Given the recognized need to find short-term solutions for the pressing problems the EU is facing in a long-term perspective that is itself in the centre of controversies, decision-makers as well as policy analysts face the challenge to reduce uncertainties and to find ways to identify alternative futures. The task for either is far from identical. As Henry Kissinger, who has acted on both sides of the river, has observed, “intellectuals analyze the operations of international systems; statesmen build them. And there is a vast difference between the perspective of an analyst and that of a statesman. The analyst can choose which problem he wishes to study, whereas the statesman’s problems are imposed on him. The statesman must act on assessments that cannot be proved at the time that he is making them.”¹⁷

Supportive Research: Demands and Roles

While this basic condition of policy-making in terms of statesmanship still holds, policy making has become vastly more dependent on “analysts.” In fact, a common culture has become a condition for the freedom to act on the part of major powers inside the EU and globally. More than ever, envisaging future constructs that can be

pursued in current circumstances and guide problem solving in pressing situations requires a universe of discourse that combines the skills of policy makers and analytic advice.

This is reality in the United States. The European Security Research Program (ESR) could yet become an engine to generate coherent advice for European players and the EU at large. In this vein the FOCUS project could be seen as a pace setter:

- It is a central part of the ESR which in turn is part of a sustained effort to strengthen the European knowledge base
- It has a long-term time horizon
- It pursues a participatory strategy to help generating a common strategic culture
- It aims at providing European decision-makers with a tool that is intended to ease harmonized assessments and decision-making
- It presents scenarios and orientations for future security research in support of research planning, and if desired also in support of policy-making
- To facilitate relevant research and scenario-analysis, the difference between context scenarios which are standard and the embedded scenarios to be generated through the project is relevant only in view of the prime task of building an analytic platform as a tool
- For institutional reasons its prime applicability is defined for research planning. This does not belittle the declared purpose. In fact, the tool can be expected to be of extended usefulness if applied more widely.

Future European security research as foresighted by FOCUS, whatever its specific value for specific problem-solving, will be the more relevant the more it results from informed debates on policy-formation. It is appropriate to assess where the alternative worlds FOCUS has presented and the process of arriving at those meet requirements the present European predicament is posing and where it has limitations that call for broadening it in scope. After all, FOCUS is recognizant of the fact that foresighting is no fixed approach but is evolving almost as are the alternative futures it seeks to elaborate.

Foresighting: The FOCUS Approach

The FOCUS project applies the methodology recommended by both the European Security Research Advisory Board¹⁸ and ESRIF.¹⁹ While it is not a fixed approach, it allows to deal with broad qualitative uncertainties and assumes “the possibility of different futures (or future states) to emerge, as opposed to the assumption that there is

an already given, pre-determined future, and hence highlights the opportunity of shaping our futures.²⁰

Foresighting is widely practiced by corporations and governments. Corporations have in fact increasingly based strategic decisions on scenario-analysis.²¹ For governments and multinational organizations this has become practice for sectoral decision-making, e.g. in defence planning. The EU Commission has itself undertaken a comprehensive effort to develop and analyze scenarios for Europe 2010, although without effects on policy-making.²² In academia and RTOs numerous efforts have been made to offer alternative futures for guiding policy making, but governments seldom share the assumptions.²³

Both the challenges and the requirements (“Big Themes”) are considered in their given context (see Figure 1). The three basic requirements differ in how they affect the EU’s needs for comprehensiveness and effective internal structure. In regard to the former, Europe is part of what is exposed to the Global Commons (except for non-man-made or industrial incidents that are not representing new challenges). Critical infrastructures and capacities for secure supply chains are central to internal security. But Europe is also increasingly depending on global networks and networks within or through endangered regions in ways that still drive Europe to find roles between national and more universal structures and responsibilities. As for security (and defence as the ultimate component) the quest for Europe as a security provider may decrease and was limited anyway. But in a possibly more competitive global environment where peer competitors may polarize in critical regions, Europe’s global role could require capabilities to secure strategic freedom to act on a global scale (as originally envisaged in Saint Malo).

So far European security research under FP7 has been largely confined to the first two basic requirements.²⁴ Some global aspects of the third basic requirement are dealt with in FOCUS Deliverable 6.2 with three resulting global context scenarios (see Table 1).²⁵ But the scenario-analysis of specific requirements is deferred to subsequent research as envisaged through the FOCUS Analytic Platform.

The FOCUS approach is centred on institutional Europe as defined through the Lisbon Treaty. Within a 2035 time-horizon a scenario-approach is chosen that allows to identify threats and incidents that may affect Europe, required responses and eventually European futures.

This is in line with familiar methodologies for future research. But foresighting is not a fixed approach, and if used in problem-solving, it will be organization-specific. Depending on the purpose, scenario-analysis is often pursued through vignettes or embedded sub-scenarios. For FOCUS this is done by deriving vignettes from context

scenarios as guidance for planning future security research, i.e. in the Horizon-2020 context.

While outcomes of the project may also be evaluated and possibly used without this restriction, it is essential for some of the conceptual features of FOCUS:

- The EU is chosen as the central unit. The changing nature of both state power and the distribution of power is recognized, but the future ways for Europe to interact as a dual system with other powers are confined to how institutional Europe could or should respond.
- A continuum of internal and external security is assumed as a way to identify research needs, but this reflects only the need for reconceptualizing the evolving future structures for relating strategic units to the global system.
- Europe is seen to be exposed to external risks and threats that may cause internal challenges. They are considered as distinctly different in terms of the three challenges chosen. But apart from the fact that the range of challenges (“Big Themes”) is wider in discomfoting ways, they not only display transversal topics which is the case, but their very interactions together with other global changes are constituting the dynamics Europe may need to cope with. Once again, strategy is shaped by the choice between a unit-centred approach and a global orientation. Both are relevant, but it is important to see the differences.
- The changing global environment is recognized, but globalization and economic growth are assumed as the continuing prime drivers which tends to leave out new types of competitiveness that globalization has begun to branch out.
- Similarly, the changing nature of power—not only its distribution—is recognized, but the assumption that power will gradually move away from its parameters known from 20th century is understood in ways that narrow the scope along with the assumed dominance of globalization. Geopolitical and geostrategic dimensions of global change tend to be deferred to “strategic” analysis.
- Within this context, institutional Europe and its citizens are seen as exposed to threats and risks from both internal and external sources, which is in line with the overall objective of European security research. But this tends to exclude how global changes will necessitate more complex comprehensive-ness of EU responses and more capable and effective internal structures to sustain external pressures and to enable Europe to engage in future global competition.

This conceptual framework is chosen for research planning, which is a plausible choice. It allows relevant contributions per se and through future FOCUS-inspired research. To fully assess the overall transfer value of this approach for policy-making, the following two key issues remain to be addressed:

- What is the foreseeable general future process for translating security research into policy-guidance or even policy making, in particular in view of ongoing changes that will alter the needs for supportive research?
- How could the FOCUS approach, in a policy-centred follow-up on its core results, be combined with parallel efforts that are not unit-focused or centred on security research and planning for its future shape but seek to understand how possible global changes within the 2035 time-frame can impact Europe, what is needed for Europe to prevail in more competitive and new global environments, what kind of Europe could still develop as a global player and what is implied for European nations and citizens if Europe continues to be marginalized.

Central Unit vs. Global Context: Four Cases

To evaluate different approaches to how European and global developmental challenges may interact in the longer run, it is useful to depart from a number of distinctions, including the following:

- Europe as global security contributor vs. Europe as global player
- development state vs. trends and inflictions
- current stake plus extrapolation vs. long-term trend analysis
- external risks and threats vs. changing challenging global boundary conditions
- globalization vs. dynamic geopolitics
- self-centred perspective vs. Europe in perspective of global or regional peer countries (“looking from outside”).

Comparing EU-related foresighting to how foresighting would fit the perspectives of peer countries like the US, China or Russia displays profound differences:

- The US is constitutionally secure, but faces rapidly changing social structures and needs internal modernization to regain and preserve global dominance, yet without hegemonic leverage.
- China seeks to maintain unity and cohesion along with growth that in turn requires increasing global outreach without the risks of major confrontations and without disintegrating repercussions on domestic developments.

- Russia is needing constitutional changes to ensure unity and growth as the way to regain a global role through stabilizing and expanding dependencies of peer countries on Russian resources.
- As a dual system Europe is not expected to finalize its constitutional process which continues to complicate its global competitiveness, which in turn will be increasingly essential for preserving and protecting its internal cohesion, stability and welfare and suffices to engage in strategic partnerships without exposing itself to major confrontations.

The four powers thus differ in terms of constitutional stability, growth, global dependencies, strategic leverage, etc.

- The US is engaged in strategic contraction as a precondition for domestic stability to preserve its global role.
- China seeks to expand its global outreach to secure internal growth and cohesion and avoid foreign interference.
- Russia is intent to reinforce unity through reviving its identity as a way to maintain internal cohesion and one-dimensional external leverage that depends on cooperation *en face* of multiple competition.
- The EU is different on all accounts: It needs to stabilize itself as a strategic unit, since even major member states will not preserve their social cohesion and prosperity alone, and to that end it needs to combine its dual nature with strategic assertiveness in wider and global environments beyond its economic one-dimensionality.²⁶

Foresighting approaches could be developed for all four cases. They would obviously differ widely. Moreover, no global model exists that would allow to integrate all four foresighting approaches. Since the US is inherently defined in global terms and since relations between the US and Europe are unique, it seems expedient to compare the FOCUS approach to current US efforts to assess the US future in a global context.²⁷

The FOCUS and NIC/AC Approaches

The US National Intelligence Council (NIC) has issued for the fifth time its report “Global Trends: Alternative Worlds.”²⁸ Like its predecessors, it aims at “providing a framework for thinking about the future.”²⁹ Also like its predecessors, it has been generated in participatory manner, e.g. workshops, interviews, etc. in some 20 countries. It is focused on global futures. The role of the US as a driver is considered as one of six main game-changers.

The NIC Report is supplemented by the concurrent US Atlantic Council (AC) Report “Envisioning 2030: US Strategy for a Post-Western World.”³⁰ It is more unit-centred.

But given the shaping power of the US, the report considers the US also with regard to its role and impact on alternative worlds (“The American Factor”) and it does so essentially within the NIC framework. By implication geostrategic and geopolitical issues are more central than in the NIC Report. The US AC Report has resulted from the AC’s ongoing “Strategic Foresight Initiative.”

Taken together, the two reports can be seen as complementary unit-centred and globally-oriented efforts. However, they do not provide a model for describing interactions over extended periods.

Comparing the NIC approach to FOCUS is useful in view of the different global roles and futures for the US and the EU. These are the main elements of the NIC approach:

1) Four stabile mega-trends:

- individual empowerment
- diffusion of power
- demographic patterns
- growing food/water and energy nexus;

2) Six possible game-changers:

- crisis-prone global economy
- governance gap
- potential for increased conflict
- wider scope of regional instability
- impact of technologies
- role of the United States;

3) Seven tectonic shifts within the 2030 time-frame:

- growth of middle class
- access to lethal and disruptive technologies
- economic power shift to East and South
- aging and migration
- urbanization
- food and water shortage
- US energy independence.

4) Disruptive impacts are seen as potentially caused by “Black Swans,” that is low probability/high impact events. Eight such causes are enlisted:

- severe endemic

- accelerated climate change
- Euro/EU collapse
- democratic or collapsed China
- reformed Iran
- solar geomagnetic storms
- US disengagement.

5) Four potential worlds are considered with different key players and drivers. Like in FOCUS, these have been chosen from an endless variety of scenarios.³¹ They are seen to represent distinct pathways from future developments out to 2030. But “in reality, the future will consist of elements from all the alternative worlds.”³² These are the four alternative worlds:

- “Stalled Engines” in which the US and Europe turn inward and globalization stalls
- “Fusion” in which the US and China cooperate, leading to worldwide cooperation on global challenges
- “Gini-out-of-the Bottle” in which economic inequalities dominate
- “Non-state world” in which non-state actors take the lead in solving global challenges.³³

Towards an integrated Framework

The FOCUS Deliverable systematically addressing aspects of the global context is Deliverable 6.2, that also follows the familiar scenario-development approach (see Table 1), with five identified key drivers: the role and nature of state power, globalization and growth, security environment, societal demographics and migration and EU modalities.

For each developmental path distinctly different states are distinguished. Extrapolation of current basic trends is based on ten building blocks: continuation of the global order, but increasingly undermined by globalization and the “demands of people.” The US will remain the backbone of order with Europe “as one of its pillars.” Power centres are shifting to Asia and the Pacific. Non-state actors like IMF, World Bank, and others will increase their shaping power. The role of ideology as a source of identity will degrade. The global economy tends to turn into sustainable environment, but also begins to branch out into regionalism. The nature of power is not expected to change as a result of technological breakthroughs. Communication and information technologies will, however, challenge all traditional political system. Environmental issues will continue to be seen as global issues.

Table 1. Key drivers and distinct states in the exploration of alternative global futures.

A. Global context	B. Globalisation and economic growth	C. Security environment	D. Societal Demographics & Migration	E. EU Modalities
A1 Dominant global competitions	B1 Accelerated globalisation and growth	C1 Global collective security architecture	D1 Balanced demographics and limited migration	E1 Continuation
A2 Global management	B2 Cyclic globalisation and growth	C2 Cooperative security	D2 Expanding demographic gaps and controlled migration	E2 Differentiation
A3 Dominant regional dynamics	B3 Retarded globalisation and growth	C3 Fragmented security	D3 Migration tsunami	E3 Enhanced selective governance
A4 Conflict-dominated global context				E4 Outside EU's institutional framework

Consistency analysis³⁴ has produced three global scenarios out of a multitude of possible scenarios:

- Constructive World
- Fragmented World
- Confusing World.

They differ with regard to stability of the global order, the continuation of globalization and growth, the role and orientation of the global powers, the conflict potential and above all to the status, role, potential and influence of Europe.

This compares to three of the four worlds the NIC Report offers (constructed as the result of a similar selection process):

- Constructive World corresponds roughly to the Fusion World
- Fragmented World to the Gini-out-of-the-Bottle World, and
- Confusing World in some ways to the Stalled Engine World.

The NIC Report adds the Non-state World in which nation-states do not disappear, but are turning inward (in some ways comparable to the flat world described by Friedman³⁵).

Non-state actors are understood not just negatively as hostile non-state units, e.g. terrorists, but on a global scale as corporations, NGOs and other organizations that face and possibly cause global changes and challenges in a world where states continue to act, though with diminishing leverage and control. Thomas L. Friedman has described this as the “flattening world” that will leave some parts on the globe outside and that can also be instrumentalized by some peer countries at the expense of others. In an earlier study Jean Marie Guéhenno went further and sought to anticipate the implications of a less institution-driven, networked world for Europe,³⁶ a perspective that the NIC Report re-introduced as the fourth of its alternative worlds.³⁷

Up to the generation of the three context scenarios, the FOCUS approach thus is in many ways comparable to the NIC Report, although many details differ, including the centring of FOCUS on the planning of security research to support future EU roles as a global actor to provide security to its citizens.

Therefore, FOCUS by its nature does not cover the full range of the NIC Report:

- For FOCUS the reference organization is institutional Europe. Given the nature of the dual system, Europe is not defined as a strategic player in relation to other powers and in a geostrategic context.
- FOCUS considers Europe essentially in terms of its institutional structure as defined through the Lisbon Treaty with allowance for change in view of the built-in flexibility and possible needs for treaty changes. The AC Report seeks to evaluate Europe’s global role and follows earlier NIC perspectives according to which a “federal Europe—unlikely in the 2020 time-frame—is not necessary to enable it to play a weightier international role so long as it can begin to mobilize resources and fuse divergent views into collective policy goals... an economic “leap forward”—stirring renewed confidence and enthusiasm in the European project—could trigger such enhanced international action.”³⁸
- FOCUS considers European futures in terms of the EU’s institutional framework. The NIC’s Mapping Report is downgrading the institutional aspects and claims instead that “Europe’s future international role depends greatly on whether it undertakes major structural economic and social reforms to deal with its aging work-force problem. The demographic picture will require a concerted, multi-dimensional approach.”³⁹
- Institutional Europe is lacking the kind of identity peer countries somehow have. For the same reason it is stressing the “inside” and its borderlines more than the big nation states would, which tend to view Europe anyway rather as a multiple identity that would need to forge collective will whatever the degree of formal integration.

- The FOCUS worlds and their derivatives tend to be oriented towards a narrower range of challenges and requirements than the NIC Report which is mainstream. Changing rankings over time and power shifts and the respective inflictions cannot be represented within the FOCUS framework if foresight is tied to institutional Europe as the reference organization. The nearest equivalent to *finalité* would be to continuously ensure the balance between national and European consciousness of all nations on the Continent, as Timothy Garton Ash has suggested.⁴⁰

Given the global role of the US, the NIC approach provides for the dimensions needed for assessing the changing distributions and shifts of power and influence. But it does not differentiate between the identity of multiple Europe and institutional Europe.

Like NIC and the AC's Strategic Foresight Initiative, the FOCUS approach could broaden its applicability if repeated e.g. every five years. For supportive security research this implies that indeed "roads are made by walking," not prescriptions. FOCUS can initiate research that could at least show directions and help generating problem communities that render the foresighting process ever more pivotal and moving it beyond short-term tactics on to strategic orientations that could make Europe a full-scale partner and counterpart for the peer countries and on a global scale. Within the next five years—until the sixth NIC Report—it should not be too difficult to make the two approaches mutually supportive. After all, for both FOCUS and NIC common US and European approaches promise the most constructive "worlds."

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Notes:

¹ See *EU role scenarios and resulting Table of topics and necessary disciplines for a European research agenda in the big theme: EU as a global actor based on the wider Petersberg tasks*, FOCUS Deliverable 6.2 (D 6.2), June 2012, p. 20. A summary is available for download at the project website www.focusproject.eu.

- ² See the Report *Investing into Security Research for the Benefits of European Citizens* (Brussels, EU DG Enterprise and Industry, Research Executive Agency, September 2011), <http://dx.doi.org/10.2769/22467>.
- ³ European Security Research & Innovation Forum, *ESRIF Final Report* (Brussels, December 2009), p. 117, http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/security/files/esrif_final_report_en.pdf.
- ⁴ *ESRIF Final Report*, p. 126.
- ⁵ The *Lisbon Strategy*, also known as the *Lisbon Agenda* (Lisbon: European Council, March 2000), www.wikipreneurship.eu/index.php5?title=Lisbon_agenda.
- ⁶ Council meeting, 22-23 March 2005, on the basis of the Kok Report, www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/84335.pdf.
- ⁷ See the Atlantic Council's: "Economic strength and technological innovation have been and will remain the decisive foundation and wellspring of US national power... Revitalizing the US economy and strengthening the social fabric is thus a *sine qua non* for renewing American leadership in the generation to 2030." in *Envisioning 2030: US Strategy for Post-Western World* (Washington, D.C.: Atlantic Council, December 2012), p. 22, www.acus.org/files/publication_pdfs/403/Envisioning2030_web.pdf. It is the companion piece to the Report from the National Intelligence Council's latest report *Global Trends 2030. Alternative Worlds* (Washington, D.C.: National Intelligence Council, December 2012), www.dni.gov/index.php/about/organization/national-intelligence-council-global-trends.
- ⁸ When the initial report was drafted, policy- and institutional issues were excluded. See *Research for a Secure Europe: Report of the Group of Personalities in the Field of Security Research* (Luxembourg: European Communities, 2004), http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/security/files/doc/gop_en.pdf.
- ⁹ The complexity of the situation is illustrated by the fact that solutions in different fields are facing the same dilemma: To solve the debt crisis as a widely shared view is to find compromises on the basis of more integrated and communized structures, even though the crisis tends to jeopardize the existing structures. And to reduce national defence capability gaps, the dominant current answer is pooling and sharing, even though this requires more integration in the light of increasing renationalization.
- ¹⁰ Antonio Missiroli, "Implementing the Lisbon Treaty: The External Policy Dimension," *Bruges Political Research Papers* No. 14 (May 2010), p. 25, <http://aei.pitt.edu/14448>.
- ¹¹ Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte* (München, Oldenbourg, 1960), p. 1f.
- ¹² See the classic work by Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Genius of American Foreign Policy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1953). For a typical revivalist approach see Thomas L. Friedman and Michael Mandelbaum, *That Used to Be Us: How America Fell Behind in the World It Invented and How We Can Come Back* (New York, NY: Picador, 2011). In a more forward-looking way the US Atlantic Council—based on its Strategic Foresight Initiative and supplementing the Report *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds*, NIC 2012-001 (Washington, D.C.: National Intelligence Council, December 2012)—defined the conditions for a sustainable global role for the US. See *Envisioning 2030: US Strategy for a Post-Western World*.
- ¹³ For an insightful account see Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order*, Second edition (London: Penguin Books, 2012).

- ¹⁴ Herman Van Rompuy, *Towards a genuine Economic and Monetary Union - Report by President of the European Council*, EUCO 120/12 (Brussels, 26 June 2012), www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/131201.pdf.
- ¹⁵ Final Report on the Future of Europe Group, 18 September 2012. See, for example, “Future of Europe Group plans closer EU integration,” *BBC News Europe*, 18 September 2012, www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-19638337.
- ¹⁶ Antonio Missiroli, *Implementing the Lisbon Treaty*, p. 24.
- ¹⁷ Henry Kissinger: *Diplomacy* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1994), p. 27.
- ¹⁸ European Security Research Advisory Board, *Meeting the Challenge: the European Security Research Agenda* (Luxembourg: European Communities, September 2006), http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/security/files/esrab_report_en.pdf.
- ¹⁹ *ESRIF Final Report*, pp. 117-134.
- ²⁰ *Meeting the Challenge*, p. 58.
- ²¹ For a comprehensive survey of methodologies see e.g. Ulf Pillkahn, *Using Trends and Scenarios as Tools for Strategy Development* (Berlin and Munich: Publicis Corporate Publishing, 2008).
- ²² *Scenarios Europe 2010 – Five Possible Futures For Europe* (Brussels: European Commission, Forward Studies Unit, July 1999).
- ²³ Leading experts like Peter Schwartz have in fact served on both sides.
- ²⁴ *Investing into Security Research for the Benefits of European Citizens*.
- ²⁵ For the approach and techniques used see Todor Tagarev and Petya Ivanova, “Analytical Tools in Support of Foresighting EU Roles as a Global Security Actor,” in this volume, <http://dx.doi.org/10.11610/isij.2902>. For detailed description of the context scenarios see FOCUS Deliverable 6.2 or Valeri Ratchev, Uwe Nerlich and Todor Tagarev, *Context Scenarios and Alternative Future EU Roles as a Global Security Actor, IT4Sec Reports 100* (Sofia: Institute of Information and Communication Technologies, June 2012), <http://dx.doi.org/10.11610/it4sec.0100>.
- ²⁶ This does not mean that the EU needs to acquire a federal status. While it is widely assumed in capitals outside the EU that Europe needs to forge collective identity to prevail on a global plane, in 2004 the US National Intelligence Council concluded that a federal Europe is neither likely nor necessary to enable it to play a weightier international role. Besides, it suggested that “a looming budgetary crisis in the next five years would be the likely trigger for reform.” See *Mapping the Global Future, Report of the National Intelligence Council’s 2020 Project* (Washington, D.C.; National Intelligence Council, December 2004), www.foia.cia.gov/2020/2020.pdf.
- ²⁷ Mapping FOCUS and NIC elements goes beyond what can be done here, but it is noteworthy that in the course of the FOCUS project, in particular in WP 6.2 research, a similar methodology was employed for selecting scenarios from a larger number of combinatorially possible scenarios (see Tagarev & Ivanova, “Analytical Tools”). To use that selection process, however, the elements have to be chosen through abstractions that leave room for interpretation.
- ²⁸ *Global Trends 2030*.
- ²⁹ *Global Trends 2030*.
- ³⁰ *Envisioning 2030*.
- ³¹ *Global Trends 2030*, p. 108.

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- ³² *Global Trends 2030*.
- ³³ See Thomas L. Friedman, *The World Is Flat 3.0: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century* (New York, NY: Picador, 2007).
- ³⁴ For details see Tagarev and Ivanova, “Analytical tools” and Ratchev, Nerlich and Tagarev, Context Scenarios and Alternative Future EU Roles as a Global Security Actor.
- ³⁵ Friedman, *The World Is Flat 3.0*.
- ³⁶ Jean Marie Guéhenno, *La Fin de la démocratie* (Paris: Flammarion, 1993).
- ³⁷ *Global Trends 2030*, pp. 132-137.
- ³⁸ *Mapping the Global Future*, quote on p. 61.
- ³⁹ *Mapping the Global Future*, p. 61.
- ⁴⁰ See Timothy Garton Ash, *Im Namen Europas* (Munich-Vienna: Fischer, 1995), quote on p. 601.