

*David Ramírez Morán*

*Analyst of the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies*

*E-mail: drammor@oc.mde.es*

## REVIEW

### ***EUROPEAN SECURITY ARCHITECTURE: AN IMPERFECT AND UNFINISHED SYSTEM***

*Author: Ruiz González, Francisco J. Publication date: 2015. ISBN: 978-84-9091-099-3. NIPO (hard copy): 083-15-232-8. NIPO (online version): 083-15-233-3 (e-book)*



Since the end of the Cold War, the role that Europe plays in the world has undergone a complete transformation. The creation of the European Union and its meteoric growth during the period discussed in this book, with the rapid incorporation of states to the initial seed of the European Economic Community, has been a complex process. A reality was created and with it the need to establish a common security architecture in order to preserve said reality – something that has turned into a difficult exercise when faced with the need to meet the interests of the directly involved players: the states.

In addition to the European states, the strategic scenario becomes even more complicated when taking into account the fact that neighbouring states are also affected by this architecture and that strong diplomatic and economic ties exist with them, and that the international organisations to which the different states belong are also affected. The international organisations themselves, and the decisions that have been reached by them in certain cases, have not only contributed to the cohesion necessary to achieve the agreements with which to strengthen the security architecture, but have also turned into new causes of dispute among the parties.

The security model introduced after the Second World War and during the Cold War has determined both the capacity and the model of defence of the European territory up to the present day. In this sense, the duality between the work of states and of international organisations as protagonists or custodians of the responsibility for the protection of the European territory is maintained throughout the text. European security is not confined to what happens within Europe's borders but rather it is necessary to go directly to where the conflicts that affect the security of citizens originate. The impact goes beyond the natural physical borders of the Atlantic Ocean and the Urals, and extends to North American territory and all of the Asian territory of the Russian Federation to the Pacific Coast. The location of conflicts and the unequal interests of the players in these conflicts have also represented genuine challenges.

This paper is a source of reference for the evolution in the security architecture over the period examined and describes with precision the strategic context that has driven the decisions and solutions that have been adopted.

The period analysed in detail in the paper starts with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War and finishes with the invasion of Georgia by the Russian army in 2008. This is a long period during which countless events of great importance for European security took place. For this reason, the author has divided the time frame into four parts, framed by important milestones. The first starts with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War and continues through to the CSCE, NATO and EU summits and the birth of the Russian Federation – the importance of which for European security architecture is shown throughout the book. The second period runs until the end of the 1990s with other important summits such as the NATO, EU and OSCE summits, as well as an important milestone for the Russian Federation – Putin's rise to power. The third block starts at this point and continues through to the invasion of Iraq, the publication of the European Security Strategy and the so-called “colour revolutions” at the end of 2003. It ends with a fourth period that

starts at the end of 2003 and continues through until 2008 with the incursion of the Russian army into Georgian territory. These milestones also offer a clear correlation with the publication of the most important strategic documents by the directly or indirectly involved states and international organisations.

A final chapter has also been included that introduces the events that took place during the period 2008-2013. It is an important contribution as it was during this period that the changes came about in the security environment that most affected the obsolescence of security planning that was only updated in 2008 after the European Security Strategy in 2003. This chapter also serves to support the author's thesis on the fragility of the European security architecture when faced with changes in the strategic context.

The model that has been used for the analysis in each one of the time frames is made up of a parallel description of the circumstances that affected decision-making by the different players involved, directly or indirectly, in the construction of the European Security Architecture. In each one of the time frames, the analysis is divided into various sections that deal with the strategic environment in which the main players find themselves: the European Union, Russia, the United States, as well as the countries that have gradually become incorporated into international organisations.

Throughout the book, the positions of the different players are analysed, as well as how these positions have changed, at times due to a change in leadership and, in other cases, due to a change in the political direction of these players when faced with external events.

During this period, there have also been important changes in direction that, in many cases, can be considered as preliminary steps in favour of the interests of some of the players. So, unilateral decisions have been taken that collide head-on with conditions that had been fundamental in reaching previous agreements. This has also contributed to the flare-up of tensions between players and confrontations between the parties that have made the creation of this security architecture even more difficult.

In each chapter there is a comparative analysis of the main lines of action set out in states' and organisations' strategic documents and this is an interesting tool with which to analyse the rapprochement and distancing between the parties.

Throughout the text, the excellent research work that has been carried out is clear to see. The different occurrences that have taken place are masterfully used to provide the context for the unfolding of events and to instil in the reader a general idea of what to expect in the short and medium term. Also worth noting is the extensive bibliography and the numerous documentary references upon which the description of the evolution of the Security Architecture within the analysed period is based.

The publication of this paper comes at an opportune moment as it is an excellent instrument that can be used to understand the situation in which the Global Security Strategy is being developed. This is the strategy that Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, will submit to the European Council in mid-2016.