

A Twenty-First Century Concert of Powers – Promoting Great Power Multilateralism for the Post-Transatlantic Era

The 21st Century Concert Study Group

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Executive Summary

OVERVIEW

Great power conflict has not necessarily become a thing of the past. Given the deficiencies of the UN Security Council, the world now requires a new global institution for security governance – a 21st Century Concert of Powers – based on cooperation among its great powers. Its main purpose would be to allow such states to manage latent as well as on-going conflicts among themselves and also address current security challenges; it would likewise facilitate cooperation related to other important (non-security) governance issues. Drawing on the experiences, but avoiding the shortcomings, of the 19th Century European Concert, we outline a modern Concert design marked by strong norms and efficient procedures. We envision an institution consisting of ten to seventeen members, one that mainly hosts major powers but also strives to provide a satisfactory regional balance. The 21st Century Concert is designed to complement rather than replace current institutions. Its main mode of operation would be consultation, confidence-building and the informal but methodical preparation of decisions in established multilateral bodies.

THE NEED FOR GREAT POWER COOPERATION

While globalization drives interdependence among national economies and societies ever forward, a seminal shift is taking place within the sphere of states. New powers, in what used to be called the developing world, are rising to the status of global powers, and a new distribution of power is coming of age. Yet great powers continue to retain their dominant role in international security, with the largest agglomeration of economic power as well as the most threatening accumulation of means of destruction. We are currently witnessing two major structural shifts in global interstate relations: a trend away from unipolarity marked by US hegemony, with the corresponding possible rise of China and, in the future, India, to or even beyond the level of US power. Additionally, a number of concrete and latent conflicts exist between the major powers of today (e.g. territorial issues in the East and South Chinese Sea and in the Himalayas, and the resurgence of arms races). While these conflicts, as such, seem manageable, their potential dangers are magnified by the simultaneous processes of power change, one which inevitably carries a degree of instability and uncertainty into world politics. In the worst case, this could lead to the ultimate “common bad”: a great power war. Assuming that peace among the major powers is simply a natural development, merely due to the fact that interstate war has been declining in the last decades, is dangerously misleading. Such complacency overlooks these challenges and ignores the amount of effort and political prudence that has been required to avoid a great power war since 1945. A war between modern (mostly nuclear-armed) great powers would surpass anything that humankind has ever experienced by several orders of magnitude and could result in the collapse of civilization as we know it.

The first priority in global security governance must therefore address the management of relations among the major powers; if they were to cooperate, (security) governance would be a serious possibility. If they do not, (security) governance would be impossible and major violent conflict quite likely. Distrust and suspicion among the great powers in the security sector will be detrimental to the cooperation required for resolving other urgent issues. Hence, successful security cooperation would enable more successful great power multilateralism on a variety of other important policy topics and fields of governance.

A FRESH LOOK AT “CONCERTS”

A 21st Century Concert draws on the lessons, successes as well as shortcomings of the 19th Century European Concert. The former concert went on to prevent great power war for forty years, curb escalation during the German and Italian wars of unification, and stabilize the war-prone European continent for another forty years. It ultimately succeeded, albeit only temporarily, in transforming the European great powers into peace managers. However, the Concert of Europe was not without its flaws: In constructing a 21st Century Concert several pitfalls will have to carefully be avoided. Some aspects of the European Concert, such as imperialism and colonialism, would, of course, have no place within a 21st Century Concert. Other challenges, such as providing incentives for key actors to join the Concert, will take a distinctive contemporary form

THE 21st CENTURY CONCERT

A 21st Century Concert would have diverse objectives: Its primary aim would be preventing a clash/war between/amongst the great powers themselves. But it would also aim at: (i) maintaining political equilibrium characterized by restraint, acceptance of other powers' legitimate interests, and the recognition that security is inter-dependent; (ii) facilitating common activities in security-related areas; and (iii) creating the conditions for common action in relation to additional governance issues. In order to operate successfully, the Concert would have to grant both rising and existing great powers a voice in any emerging world order, and also in a manner recognized as legitimate by lesser powers. It would likewise have to allow great powers with differing ideologies, histories and cultural heritages to grow accustomed to one another in a non-confrontational setting. Further, it would have to provide a forum in which informal consultation can take place, away from the constraints and protocols of existing multilateral fora such as the UN Security Council. Finally, it must foster shared understandings and a common sense of responsibility among great powers.

Members and Non-Members

An important question concerns the membership of a 21st Century Concert. Here we propose a mixture of states that should be added on the basis of their existing power and influence (for example the United States and China) and of states who should be added in order to achieve balance (for example South Africa and Egypt). While the actual composition would be a matter of political and diplomatic debate, the smallest conceivable version would entail ten members while the largest concert would have seventeen. In any version all regions would be present, as well as all major cultures and religions. Altogether, the proposed candidates would account for about 4.2 billion people or 60% of the world's population in a concert of ten; nearly 4.6 billion people or about 65% of the world's population would be covered by a concert of seventeen. Such a concert would further comprise of 72% (ten members) to 80% (seventeen members) of the world's GNP and from 80% (ten members) to 86% (seventeen members) of the world's military spending. Still, the appropriate way of dealing with non-members would be imminent for the success of a 21st Century Concert. A general rule of thumb should be to minimize the consequences of exclusion and maximize possibilities for participation. What is needed are tailor-made strategies for various kind of states, ranging from larger powers – that just miss concert membership – to middle and small powers as well as states involved in significant quarrels with a great power or the international community at large.

Procedures and Norms

A 21st Century Concert should have modest beginnings and remain an informal body that seeks to strike a balance between transparency and confidentiality. Its main task would not be to unilaterally make decisions but rather harmonize views and prepare a broad consensus on decisions that are to be taken elsewhere (for example in the UNSC). As concerns bilateral conflicts between Concert members, an informal approach should be employed: there should be explicit agreement that every state carries the duty of attempting to resolve bilateral disputes. Such talks would not be conducted in public but rather bilaterally *in camera* and regularly at the margins of Concert meetings.

In order to achieve its purpose, a 21st Century Concert will have to rest on a solid foundation of norms that guide the behavior of its members. These norms would include acknowledging the urgency of cooperation, accepting equality between and diversity among great powers, showing empathy and respect for the vital interests of the partners as well as for the interests of non-members, pursuing good neighborhood policies, renouncing the unilateral use of military force and the aim of military superiority in general, and abiding by international law. These norms will likely remain a “work in progress” as it would be unrealistic to expect all of them to be fulfilled at the outset. However, it will be important to “move towards” these norms, lest the Concert should disintegrate.

The Concert and its embedding in the existing world order

The 21st Century Concert would carefully need to integrate itself into the existing world order. Its purpose would not be to substitute but complement existing organizations and institutions. The UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council, for example, should not be marginalized by the Concert; rather, intra-great power deliberations in the Concert should be used to overcome gridlock within these institutions. Relations between the Concert and other international institutions like the G20 and regional security organizations – which are of increasing importance in today’s world – should be characterized by a spirit of cooperation, as opposed to competition. At the same time, the Concert should engage with civil society and care about the legitimacy it enjoys among non-governmental organizations.

The Concert would therefore be embedded within a broader framework of multilateralism. It would help prevent the ultimate common bad, a great power war, and also facilitate cooperation in other areas. Any demands it requires would therefore not mean unacceptable sacrifices, either for member or non-member states; on the contrary, creating a new forum for great power cooperation would serve their own long-term interests. A 21st Century Concert would very likely be able to improve the efficiency of global (security) governance and deepen the culture and practices of cooperation.

Introduction

The world is approaching a watershed moment: A seminal shift is arising in the international system as new powers in what used to be called the “developing world” rise to global power status, leading to what seems to be a new distribution of power. While globalization is making the headlines, and driving interdependence among national economies and societies, old instincts of power politics based on national foundations and even nationalism still persist. If old and new great powers cannot find a way to resolve their disputes in the spirit of cooperation and contain their rivalries, significant new dangers will come to the fore and undermine progress in solving global governance problems, from the financial order up to climate change.

Examples of comprehensive, successful and peaceful management of great power relations in an institutionalized form are rare. The European Concert of the 19th century, the “Concert of Europe”, is one of the few successful templates that history supplies. It gives reason for hope as well as concern. Hope, because great the powers of this era did indeed succeed in pacifying their disputes and managing peaceful change for an extended period of time. Concern, because European powers prospered at the cost of most of the rest of the world, as well as the fact that the concert did eventually dissolve in the trenches of World War I. The calamity of war must be prevented. Furthermore, the imperialism of the era runs contrary to today’s established modern international norms and proves either costly or unrealizable. In this study, we set out to consider and analyze the risks and opportunities of this new age and propose a new type of great power concert: a 21st Century Concert that avoids the shortfalls of its 19th century counterpart. At the outset, we set out to clarify the presumptions that are at the root of our deliberations.

First, great powers are intrinsically significant actors, more so for their potential to do harm than for their efforts to do good. We recognize that states are not the only actors shaping world politics; we are keenly aware of the panoply of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), economic enterprises, international organizations, religious movements and other non-state entities that are populating the transnational and international sphere. However, our first and foremost objective is to contain the possibility of irreversible harm. It is for this reason that we focus on the great powers.

Second, concertation among the great powers must be embedded in reinforced global multilateralism. The interrelationship between great power cooperation and the rest of the world must fundamentally be different than what it was in the 19th century. The legitimacy of a 21st Century Concert would be of much higher relevance and must likewise rest on very different pillars than before. Consultation, outreach, granting ownership to non-members and a humble attitude, along with empathy on the part of the great powers towards other states, are of vital importance.

Third, we do not use the Concert of Europe as a model that may simply to be copied. We look at the reasons for its successes as well as its failure and attempt to learn from these experiences by finding contemporary equivalents and favorable conditions for its success. In order to do so, we identify the factors clearly related to the historical conditions of its time, removing inapplicable and unbearable factors for today’s world. We aim to develop a concept that is both new and well adapted to the circumstances of the 21st century.

Fourth, we acknowledge the relevance of issues other than “hard security” in world politics, such as economics, health, energy, the environment, culture, values and human rights, all of which are, however, connected to security in some manner. We maintain, moreover, that global solutions to all of these issues will be made impossible should the great powers remain at loggerheads. Exacerbated security competition, a Cold War or “hot” conflicts can prevent effective cooperation on softer issues and consume the scarce resources needed to deal with them. Concentrating on the seem-

ingly narrow issue of great power relations is therefore intended to help keep the full scope of the common good of mankind in sight.

Chapter 1 of this study begins by outlining the risks and opportunities embodied by the emerging great power constellation of our time. Chapter 2 goes on to present the promise of a Concert of Powers in comparison to other possible arrangements, while Chapter 3 elaborates on shortcomings of the best known historical concert, the Concert of Europe, as well as on obstacles to a modern concert. Chapter 4 discusses the criteria of who should be included in great power cooperation of the 21st century and, on this basis, presents options for the composition of a 21st Century Concert. Chapter 5 handles the important issue of how to mitigate inevitable risks resulting from the exclusiveness of a small group of countries deliberating on issues that affect the world in general while excluding other actors. Chapter 6 proposes a set of norms and rules that should guide great power cooperation within the framework of a 21st Century Concert in order to avoid clashes among them. Chapter 7 relates the proposed 21st Century Concert to existing institutions and to the non-governmental world, and Chapter 8 explores its modes of operation. The final chapter serves to summarize the conclusions drawn.

This paper is the result of work by an international study group with scholars from across most of the world's major regions. As a matter of course, there were and are divergences on some issues. The role of small states and non-governmental actors, for example, were given varying emphasis by different participants. The salience of some issues, including economics, was equally afforded varied attention. Participants viewed the benefits of great power cooperation with divergent degrees of skepticism. But we stand united in the need to avoid a return to early 20th century constellations and crises, and to the urgent responsibility of the great powers to take all necessary measures to prevent such a calamity. It is in this spirit of joint endeavor that the study was carried out.

Chapter 1 – A world of peril and opportunity

Great power multilateralism: present and future dangers, needs and opportunities

Global politics of today are comprised of a greater variety of actors than ever before. These include international organizations, multinational corporations, business associations, civil society-oriented NGOs, and transnational terrorist and criminal groups, just to name a few. Yet, while the amount and types of actors has multiplied in the process of globalization, great powers retain their dominant role in international security, with the largest agglomeration of economic power and the most threatening accumulation of the means of destruction. The first priority for global security governance, therefore, is the maintenance of amicable relations between the great powers. When they cooperate, (security) governance, including joint crises response, is a serious possibility; when they do not, (security) governance is impossible and major violent conflict is quite likely.

Thus, the world of today is in peril as great power relations continue to be characterized by latent and manifest conflicts, security dilemmas and an energetic arms race. At the same time, unequal economic growth indicates a rather rapid shift in global power structures. Further, instability among the weakest states can lead to dangerous global ripple effects and trigger disagreements, tensions and even lead to clashes among great powers. Major power shifts are, as history has shown, dangerous, and have often erupted in major wars. These developments point to the potential for great power conflicts, yet it is exactly the opposite – great power cooperation – that is needed in order to deal with many contemporary global (governance) problems.

Whereas the capacity of great powers to provide positive *common goods* is certainly limited, their capacity to produce *common bads* is almost unlimited. Consequently, avoiding common bads is the primary motivation for striving towards great power cooperation. At the same time, however, the avoidance of such common bads through the development of mutual trust might be the precondition for producing some common goods, including the most precious common good: peace. The more the focus moves from avoiding common bads to laying the groundwork for producing common goods, the greater the need for collaboration from additional emerging powers both for the legitimacy of inclusive multilateralism as well as for the capacities that these emerging powers bring to the common endeavor.

1.1 Mapping the current power structure of the world

The current world order is supposedly characterised by Western hegemony that is championed by the United States. This constellation has, in the past decade or two, started to be questioned by new emerging regions (like Asia-Pacific) and powers. This hegemony came into existence in the wake of World War II and prevailed throughout the Cold War and beyond. The bipolarity of the Cold War was followed by what was termed the ‘unipolar moment’; US predominance proved to have greater longevity than some had expected. Today, the US is still the leading state in most power indicators, from GDP to military expenditure. Yet recent developments and projections suggest that major power shifts are underway: US growth rates and those of other Western economies have been significantly lower than those of some rising powers (especially China and India). Economic strength as well as the formal and informal social standing that it entails serves as the basis for political power and influence.

Projecting these trends into the future, we expect to witness the emergence of new power poles and the possibility of a literal power transition: a position change at the top of the international system. Under some projections, China could overtake the US (in terms of GDP) well before 2050, with India following in tow. At the same time, almost all rising powers face tremendous challenges and even domestic and international crises, implying that their roads to becoming “new great powers”

may not be smooth. Still, while *exact* long-term prognoses are notoriously unreliable, the *general* trend and its structural implications can hardly be denied. This casts a shadow on world politics even today, since many actors are already acting in anticipation of shifting power relations.

Meanwhile, it has become clear that Washington can no longer provide effective international security governance; neither on its own, nor with the help of the Transatlantic framework. This has resulted in a leadership vacuum at a critical moment of international change. Concurrently, rising powers such as China and India advance their own views about how best to manage the international system and demand greater say in international decision-making. In a world in which both markets as well as security are global in nature, the Washington Consensus, Brussels Consensus, Beijing Consensus, New Delhi Consensus, Moscow Consensus – and other developing conceptions of order – will regularly interact and interfere with one another. Apart from power shifts among leading states, additional circumstances are calling for a new arrangement in global security governance: Changing notions of legitimacy increasingly put the Western claim to speak for the “international community” into question. The central importance of emerging states and societies in common problems is rising as well. Due to the major effects that any social upheavals in major states would have – whether in terms of negative impacts on inter-state relations, especially via nationalism, or in terms of preventing coordinated and effective international responses to common problems –, finding stable and novel domestic agreements on social justice and a stable system of global capitalism cannot exclusively be carried out by a single-country or the West alone.

1.2 Mapping the challenges

Major interstate war has been declining steadily over the last decades, particularly among great powers, compared to the past situation of war sparked by inter-state-competition. This welcome development has been the motivation for the thesis of the “obsolescence of major war”. Treating peace among the great powers as a natural outgrowth of favorable structural circumstances, however, overlooks the great efforts and political prudence that have been required to avoid a great power war since 1945, nuclear war included, and the sheer amount of luck mankind has had in this regard. Thus, even if one concurs that interstate war between great powers is less likely today than in the late 19th and the early to mid-20th centuries, or even during the Cold War, one must still face the dangerous possibility that sudden clashes or steady and, in the end, fatal escalations could occur. The ramifications of a war between modern (mostly nuclear-armed) great powers go beyond anything that humankind has experienced before and could end in the collapse of civilization.

1.2.1 Structural risks: the end of hegemony, power shifts and power transition

We are witnessing two major structural shifts in global interstate relations: a trend away from the post-Cold War dominance of the United States, accompanied by the possible rise of China – and, at a later point, India – to or even surpassing the level of US power. Competition between several powers is probably harder to handle in diplomatic and balance-of-power terms than the static situation of bipolarity during the Cold War. The world simply does not have any experience in dealing with overlapping global and regional arms races (including nuclear ones). Moreover, multi-polar international politics that are rife with conflict may deteriorate into an inflexible bipolar alliance confrontation, a constellation that would lack the reassuring stability of long-term bipolarity and which might also escalate quickly. The situation is further complicated by the increasingly au-

onomous potential for action by states with “deviant” political agendas. This could create splits and tensions among the great powers, serving as a catalyst for conflict.

Furthermore, a period of power transition is quite distinct from the order imposed by hegemony (though one should note that hegemony itself also fuels opposition and resistance). Power transitions – meaning position changes at the top of the international power pyramid – create the risk of powerful backlashes among both rising powers as well as defenders of hegemony. Both sides seek to rule and control the international order that – with its norms, regimes and institutions – had been established by the dominant power and its allies, and who, consequently, lay claim to most benefits arising thereof. These benefits may be of a material (wealth, security) or immaterial (status, recognition, justice) nature. Meanwhile, rising powers push for their “place in the sun”: they reject norms and institutions that do not sufficiently reflect their own interests and values, and they claim equal status with the hegemon and other pre-existing great powers, often long before they have attained equality in power. Social status tends to concurrently change at a much slower pace than material power. On the other hand, the defenders tend to struggle for the preservation of their turf and all the benefits of the status quo; they seek to implement measures that prevent and impede the further rise of any challengers. Relatively weak states (or even middle powers) attempt to take on a more active role in the international arena by promoting protest or “deviant” diplomacy. It is obvious that this constellation comes with high risks. Meanwhile, rising states may also enter into potent conflict with one another concerning their relative status and rank.

As it currently stands, violent conflict between the USA, as a former superpower, its European allies, who seek to preserve their rank/status, and newly emerging powers do not appear to be inevitable, but possible. While the former cling to their leadership positions within the institutions and systems of governance established after World War II, the latter call for rank and status corresponding to the current and future distribution of power. Moreover, turf battles *between* rising powers should also not be ruled out. An additional difficulty is associated with Russia, which seeks to maintain the Soviet Union’s former status as superpower even though its actual power resources have tangibly shrunk. These disputes contain the disquieting potential for escalation, being that all sides, from their respective points of view, create legitimate demands and regard their own claims as justified, and, in turn, a matter of justice.

On the other hand, not all historical power transitions have led to war. Dissatisfaction among rising powers often dissipates once their claims for equal status are accommodated; status accommodation also mitigates rivalries among several rising powers. The fears of a declining hegemon recede once it is no longer faced with a serious loss of influence, but assured a long-term position in collective leadership. Achieving such a situation of mutual accommodation is no trivial task and requires great effort and prudence on the part of political leadership of all the great powers, just as keeping peace did during the Cold War.

1.2.2 Conflicts of interest and governance problems

In the world of the coming decades, four powers are likely to determine the extent of peace and conflict on the global level: the US, China, India and Russia. These four – on account of their current or emerging power, their network of cooperation and conflict, as well as their capacity to be constructive or cause disturbances – will likely be at the top of the international power pyramid and therefore become major competitors.

These four powers embody different systems of rule which are based on differing worldviews. Their relations thus start from a situation of latent division which makes joint conflict management, resolution and security cooperation a significant challenge. The historical developments of these countries have engendered quite unique historical experiences and have led to diverging positions on a number of key issues in international politics. For example, the US sees sovereignty of others as contingent upon the observation of certain standards of governance. On the other hand, sovereignty remains an untouchable sanctuary for the other three states. Those powers whose own sovereignty has been jeopardized, impaired or even revoked during the last centuries and through colonial relations and/or war – China and India in particular – show little inclination to accept “conditional sovereignty” in their diplomacy. Furthermore, the use of military force to resolve international crises and the relationship between states and markets also very much depend on (political) culture. All of these factors create further friction in already tense relations.

China, India and Russia perceive the inviolability of their national sovereignty and territorial integrity as a priority interest. At the same time, all three countries feel challenged by separatist, extremist or other forces: Russia with respect to the Northern Caucasus, India with respect to separatists in Kashmir and the northeastern states, Maoist insurgents and Islamist and Hindu extremists, and China with respect to Tibet or the Uyghurs in the Xinjiang province. Most prominently, China sees its national unity threatened by the dispute over Taiwan. Moreover, all three countries principally reject outside attempts to interfere with their internal policies, notably in the area of human rights.

Russia’s core interests include the revitalization of its status as a world power, obtaining a newly defined status as an energy superpower, and holding onto its remaining influence in the post-Soviet era. This has led to tensions with the US, which works towards the disentanglement of the Russian periphery from Moscow’s influence (including accession to NATO in some cases) and for American influence in both the Caucasus and Central Asia. Russia’s relations with the US, significantly driven by the former superpower’s status concerns, are mired with distrust, despite any efforts at attempting a “reset” in relations. Russia accuses the US of acting as a “political engineer”, both in strategically important regions and in matters of internal affairs such as support for opposition movements. The possible enlargement of NATO towards Russia’s borders and unresolved disputes over cuts to nuclear arsenals and missile defense remain areas of concern. On the other hand, Russia wants to deepen economic cooperation with Europe and is fostering a strategic partnership with India as well as economic cooperation with China.

India’s security concerns relate to Pakistan and China, to the world economy and to climate change. In general, India believes itself to be ill-equipped to deal with security and thus assumes the role of security seeker rather than a security provider. India is fearful of China’s rapidly increasing power, both economic and military, and China’s continued claim to what has become the Indian province of Arunachal Pradesh. China is, at the same time, also concerned about India, perceiving the territorial dispute over Arunachal Pradesh/South Tibet as a potential source of war and the harboring of Tibet’s exiled government in India as a threat to its territorial integrity. As a result, India has been moving closer to the US than ever, but has avoided a formal alliance and votes in accordance with the US in the UN General Assembly (UNGA) only about 25 percent of the time. While India is wary about China on issues of hard security, it is closer to China and wary of the West on other issues of core interest, particularly soft security problems such as climate change, the world economy and the question of humanitarian intervention. Both China and India share concern over the possibility of Western protectionism. Moreover, they are both suspicious of the concept of the “Responsibility to Protect”. They also argue that the mitigation of climate change is primarily the responsibility of the West.

China believes that Washington is trying to balance or even constrain its “peaceful development”, from the international level down to the domestic one. It sees itself as victim to a policy of encirclement (not least because of the US’ “pivot” towards Asia, even though Washington maintains that it is not directed against Beijing) and views the US as major obstacle to the cherished goal of national unification, as the US continues to be a protector of Taiwan. The development of the American National Missile Defense, Washington’s plans to develop the option of weaponry in space, and the huge superiority America enjoys in offensive strategic options are seen as compromising the viability of China’s nuclear deterrence capabilities. Although China is, in principle, dedicated to maintaining good relations with Russia, some conflict-prone issues do nonetheless trouble Chinese-Russian relations, such as Russian arms trading with ASEAN countries and China’s increasing influence in Central Asia. Furthermore, Russian concern exists over Chinese immigration into Eastern Siberia, and both countries continue to be suspicious of the other’s rise.

For the US, stability in the vitally important regions of Europe and Asia, the unfettered flow of oil through the Persian Gulf and adjusting the international system to the rise of emerging powers, especially China, continue to remain issues of top priority. The key question for Washington is how to go about achieving these goals in an era of emerging constraints, including problems of fiscal solvency and increasing domestic reluctance to sustain a full portfolio of global commitments.

Thus, tensions of varying degree exist among all four powers, with the exception of India/Russia and India/US. Two of the conflict-constellations are of particularly high risk, while two others (both involving Russia) are of medium risk. The relation with the highest risk is that of China-US, followed by China-India. Perhaps the most dangerous issue in the near future will be the East and South Chinese Sea debates, in which China is pursuing territorial claims against Japan and members of ASEAN bordering these international waters; here, the US assumes the role of a protector of the latter countries. At the same time, China feels that its legitimate interests of being a maritime power in the Pacific are not being sufficiently acknowledged by the US. Moreover, the issue of Taiwan may likewise flare up at any point. Unresolved territorial disputes exist between India and China. China is also a relevant factor in the on-going conflict between India and Pakistan. Additionally, China has warned India against joining the US as the naval protector in the ASEAN region, where the US, China and India are involved in a naval arms race, one that is increasingly extending into the Indian Ocean. In this constellation, turmoil in and among smaller states in regions of interest could draw great powers into opposing sides as during the Cold War.

Furthermore, the US, Russia, China, and India are involved in an incipient nuclear arms competition, triggered by changes in capabilities, superior US strategic strike options and the pursuit of a national missile defense system by the US. Both developments are seen as threats to the viability of nuclear deterrence by Russia and China. These two states are reacting with countermeasures: Russia is substituting old missiles with new ones and China is consistently modernizing its nuclear arsenal. Since India will determine its own deterrence needs with regard to the Chinese position, several overlapping arms races are under way that might contain the risk of instability, which will even increase further once they extend into space.

In another sphere, a completely new dimension of conflict and rivalry is rapidly emerging in cyberspace. As highly sophisticated cyber *malware* (malicious software) has been anonymously created and deployed against critical infrastructure objects, military, corporate and governmental networks in many states; great powers are edging closer to cyber wars. Russia and China have been accused of massive cyber espionage activities and covert attacks conducted for the sake of political motivation against their opponents and partners in the international arena. The US has also allegedly developed and used advanced cyber weapons in cooperation with Israel; these include malware that

struck Iran's nuclear infrastructure between 2008 and 2011. Recently, the US has even been accused of spying on its European allies on a broad scale. It is very difficult to trace cyber-attacks back to a culprit, and there is a lack of international law that prevents or prohibits coordinated malicious activities in cyberspace. Considering this, the world may gradually be drifting towards the Hobbesian condition of "*war of everyone against everyone*" in cyberspace.

There is a "wildcard risk" also at play that relates to the growing thirst for crude oil in the West, China and India, turning the Persian Gulf into a potential hot spot for conflict. Even in the absence of a resource-driven conflict, as new fracking technology may be diminishing Western reliance on Gulf oil, the Middle East remains a volatile place for great power interactions. Issues ranging from the "Arab Spring" to unequivocally negative developments like the civil war in Syria, the Israel-Palestine conflict and the recurring conflict over the Iranian nuclear program all demonstrate the necessity for great power cooperation as well as the dangers associated with *the absence of* cooperation and the conflicts that might arise *about* such cooperation (e.g. differences between the West and Russia/China on how to handle Syria and Iran).

Despite these conflicts, all of today's great powers, fortunately, also share a number of stability-related interests, including the elimination of threats posed by terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and the prevention of armed conflict with potential for escalation. Furthermore, some global governance problems demand great power coordination. The great powers are increasingly being enmeshed in a global economy, in developing multiple interdependencies that create common economic interests at the bilateral level, and in general economic stability accompanied by steady, sustainable growth.

The conflicts enumerated above are of varying intensity and vehemence. As of now, none of these conflicts have led to extreme antagonism. However, while the conflicts seem manageable *per se*, their inherent dangers become magnified once combined with the structural tendencies underlying great power relations today. It takes much less effort to provide *common bads* than to create *common goods*. Both the structural risks as well as existing conflicts between the great powers together raise the specter of potential *common bads* being that they negatively affect the livelihood not only of the powers involved but also of the entire international community. The combination and mutual impact of seething conflicts and the risks associated with the redistribution of international power, possibly including a power transition, could produce the ultimate *common bad*: a cold or even hot great power war.

Great powers could, however, also be drawn into conflicts with or between less powerful states in which other great powers also have interests. Additionally, there are other global challenges that cannot be dealt with individually but only through coordinated measures. These include the global financial crisis (which has already led to the shift from the G8 to the larger G20), other economic crises, dealing with failed states, state building activities, (humanitarian) intervention, the global war on terrorism and extremism, global warming and climate change, migration flows, epidemics, and competition for basic resources and energy. While existing international institutions provide forums for dealing with some of these issues, attempts to address them effectively have often failed due to lack of great power consultation and due to the fact that great powers frequently act for the sake of bolstering their status, prestige and leadership position within their respective reference group.

In order to find solutions to these problems and make global governance more effective, it will first be necessary for great powers to establish a habit of *collective* consultation and cooperation while also engaging and including other actors, especially when individual states are directly concerned.

Meeting frequently in concert to address issues collectively, the great powers could develop a stronger sense of stewardship and responsibility for global affairs, while simultaneously enhancing mutual trust. A stable working relationship may ensure and foster enduring peace and allow the great powers to contribute their energies to pressing global problems. However, cooperation is highly improbable when the actors are entangled in a murky web of conflicts, and it is flat out impossible in a world of great power war. Thus, pressing global problems will remain unaddressed in a constellation of great power competition and power conflicts.

Great power cooperation should therefore primarily focus on the issues of war and peace, and secondarily on the issue of collective stewardship in order to make global governance on other issues more effective. This priority implies that both existing conflicts among the great powers and structural risks of major power shifts must be carefully tended to, lest competition get out of hand.

1.3 Mapping the solution: A great power concert embedded in global multilateralism

To sum up thus far: Allowing for the condition of great powers acting on their own and permitting them to fight disputes out themselves at such a critical time marked by the redistribution and diffusion of power in world politics can have seriously negative ramifications. Checking their actions from without or subjugating them to the auspices of a global authority is not realistic. A balance of power, even if underwritten by nuclear deterrence, is too unstable and thus too risky to serve as the basis of order. The only viable solution is self-restraint and accommodation, managed by a great power concert and embedded in a framework of re-launched global multilateralism.

A great power concert embedded within a broader multilateralism would:

1. ensure both rising and existing great powers of a voice in any emerging world order, utilizing an approach recognized as legitimate by lesser powers;
2. allow great powers with differing ideologies, histories and cultural heritages to grow accustomed to one another in a non-confrontational setting;
3. provide a forum in which informal consultation can take place, away from the pressures of existing formal multilateral fora such as the UN Security Council; and
4. foster shared understandings and a common sense of responsibility among great powers.

It would thereby seek to:

1. prevent military conflict between the great powers themselves;
2. maintain political equilibrium characterized by restraint, acceptance of other powers' legitimate interests, and recognition that security is inter-dependent;
3. facilitate common activities in security-related areas; and
4. create the prerequisites for common activities in regard to other problems of governance.

Such a concert must be based on a broad body of principles that guide the national policies of its members. Its institutionalization could be far reaching or general, depending on the preferences of the members and the path along which it develops. Likewise, such a concert would be conceivable in a more minimalist (focusing strictly on security) or in a more maximalist (steadily taking up more issues of global governance) version. Most likely, the Concert would begin in a rather minimalist and sparsely institutionalized way. Ultimately, the form which it would eventually take on will be a product of a political process and consensus among potential concert members rather than a scholarly prescription.

Chapter 2 – The promise of a concert of powers

Many perils the world is facing today can be either remedied or aggravated by actions that great powers take and their capacity to bring about *common goods* or *common bads*. Cooperation among great powers is therefore direly needed, unfortunately, however, difficult to establish.

The League of Nations, for example, was founded in the wake of World War I. One of its initial defects was its failure to integrate an emerging hegemon, the US, which had originally proposed the League. Furthermore, it initially did not include the revisionist powerhouses Germany and the Soviet Union either. All in all, the League proved unable to prevent or manage conflict and faded into obscurity once the wars of aggression in the 1930s were fought without interference. The UN, which replaced the League of Nations after World War II, has had a better record. During its existence, direct war between great powers has not broken out. The sole exception – the Korean War – exemplifies what a modern form of institutionalized great power multilateralism would seek to avoid: great powers being drawn into local conflict, in part owing to a lack of communication between them. But while the UN and its Security Council *have* contributed to security, the latter is associated with major shortcomings and suffers from legitimacy problems. Its permanent members were the victors in World War II, and the UNSC is hardly a body representative of today's political world. Some regions – Africa, the Middle East and Arab world, South Asia, Australasia and Latin America – are not represented among the permanent members. Furthermore, the UNSC has often failed to arrive at decisions because of disagreements between the great powers and, as a result, has been frequently circumvented by “coalitions of the willing” under the leadership of some of its most powerful member states without a legally valid mandate. The UNSC's authority to make decisions in the name of the international community in order to preserve world peace has occasionally even motivated great power turf wars, in which each side was afraid to end up as the loser. The NATO-led operation in Kosovo in the late 1990s was one example, with Russia joining halfway through and then withdrawing due to disagreements with Western countries on the goals and methods for peacekeeping. Only rarely has the UNSC worked as an arena for consultation and deliberation in which each side has sought equitable compromise.

We propose a different arrangement suitable in today's era of global instability; one that would offer a promising forum for relations centered on problem solving between great powers and through which the potential for conflict is mitigated and synergies fostered: a 21st Century Concert of powers. Why create something new rather than simply rely on existing institutions? As previously indicated, the UNSC – the most obvious alternative – neither properly reflects the power realities of today's world nor offers a necessary regional balance, as its composition is strongly biased towards the West. Moreover, the formality of the Council, while an advantage in some regards, is a disadvantage when informal deliberation and confidence-building are required. For this reason, the UNSC, as we will show, complements the Concert rather than replace it (and vice versa). The G-8, which has extended its agenda from mere economics to a number of security issues (e.g. in the realm of nuclear security), is even more limited in terms of membership. The G20 reflects a more suitable balance, but still reflects disproportionate Western representation. Moreover, it is confined to an economic agenda and may be too hard to manage.

Other suggestions fall even shorter of fulfilling existing needs than these established groupings: A “G2” composed of the US and China would revive all the nightmares of “condominium” that existed during the Cold War in times of *détente*. Burdening two great powers with the full task of global security governance would hopelessly overtax them. The project of a “League of Democracies”, a global coalition of all democratic states (more colloquially also coined “Global NATO”) would exclude and thus alienate all that are not accepted – China and Russia included – and thus invariably lead to a counter-coalition that would make governance ineffective. Furthermore, the idea would likely not go over well with democracies that were former colonies. A world state, e.g.

a “cosmopolitan democracy”, would equally fail due to resentment on the part of non-democratic members of the international community and due to the insistence by many democracies on retaining their hard-won sovereignty.

A concert of powers, regionally balanced and designed to complement existing institutions, might thus be a viable compromise. Concertation, in our understanding, means a cautious decision among the leading powers to consult regularly in an attempt to harmonize differing positions in order to develop common approaches; first, to avoid tensions among themselves that threaten to escalate towards military confrontation, and, secondly, to reach understanding among themselves in multilateral institutions on issues of global interest. When we speak of a concert, it must be custom tailored for the realities of the 21st century; however, valuable lessons might be taken by looking through the pages of history for a successful template of sustained great power multilateralism and cooperation. Here one is drawn to the Concert of Europe: the period from 1815 to 1914, during which the Concert of Europe operated, has been identified by some scholars as the least bellicose century in the “Great-Power-System” of the modern era. It is this relative peacefulness which suggests that we may find some guiding principles in the 19th century for a functioning security system today.

In a concert system, a group of great powers continuously collaborates in an institutionalized, but not necessarily formal, way in order to maintain peace and to shape, maintain, and manage change within the international order. The Concert of Europe was developed within the framework of the state system based on the 1815 Vienna Congress. This new system was consciously devised by the victorious powers of the Napoleonic wars with the aim of preventing the recurrence of such deadly great power clashes. This new order was built on new norms, cultural practices, agreements and institutional devices; these included the multilateral treaty order agreed upon at the Congress of Vienna, frequent monarchical encounters, meetings of foreign ministers and ambassadors, and the Vienna diplomatic protocol which reduced conflicts about questions of rank and prestige within the diplomatic corps.

The Concert of Europe enshrined a number of norms, some of which were given legal form, which went on to be the basis of its relative success. Members guaranteed their mutual existence, territorial integrity and recognized on another’s vital interests. They agreed upon equal treatment of member states with different capabilities. All of them committed themselves to avoid altering the status quo by force and to sustaining from intervention in other member states’ internal affairs, except by diplomatic means. Furthermore, they were united in solidarity with the common objective of containing revisionist ambitions. Most importantly, they agreed on the practice of collective consultation (as an instrument for crisis management) as well as common action.

Taken together, these devices made for a new international system that was very different from the previous balance of power system in the 18th century. While the Treaty of Utrecht, signed a century earlier, had left the job of preserving balance to national policies, through the new Concert, the balance of power was the result of a concerted negotiation process among states. New agreements and defensive institutions reduced the security dilemma among those states most likely to wage major wars. They discovered that they were the only ones capable of producing and guaranteeing general security, thereby transforming themselves into *peace-managers*.

During its existence, the Concert of Europe boasted several accomplishments. It made diplomatic mediation common practice and a responsibility of all great powers. It also gave rise to preventive diplomacy and raised awareness about the indivisibility of peace. Additionally, the Concert, by and large, restrained the great powers in Europe and thereby contributed to preventing a general European war by controlling or containing violent conflict, depending on the circumstances of the case.

In addition to imposing restraint, the Concert of Europe established a normative discourse and introduced pragmatic consultations in international relations. If powers mediated collectively, they were compelled to carry out fact-finding, to consider ethical, historical and legal arguments, and to weigh different normative categories and contradictory claims put forward by the parties to a dispute.

The great powers also developed a number of guiding principles for conflict resolution. During the Greek war of independence (1821-1831), a majority of the Concert powers agreed that a “humanitarian emergency”, as we would call it today – the harsh oppression of a national revolt –, allowed them to intervene in what would otherwise have been a domestic affair of the Ottoman Empire. Later, the Concert of Europe established the principle that an intervening power should declare its disinterestedness and never use interventions in the name of the Concert of Europe for the sake of making territorial gains or acquiring rights and titles. They also agreed on norms to dispel the hitherto highly risky consequences of dynastic succession problems. At least two more normative ideas emerged within the framework of the Concert of Europe, which deserve mention. First, aggressive alliances were largely considered anathema in 19th century international politics. Second, aggressive war came to constitute a violation of international law. This is demonstrated by the actions of representatives in 1886 when they collectively warned three war-minded Balkan states that they would oppose any war of aggression and related aggrandizement.

Given the ideological divide between the more liberal powers (Britain and France) and the autocratic powers (Russia, Austria and Prussia), the occasional management of change was another remarkable achievement. The Concert of Europe assisted Greece, Belgium, and Romania into independence, and it assisted in the transition of the province of Neuchatel from Swiss-Prussian to full Swiss possession. In all these cases, ideological orientation and even dynastic interests took second place to the common desire of keeping the system stable.

But despite its accomplishments, the Concert of Europe was not without flaws. These must be taken into account before we can endeavor to construct a 21st Century Concert. In the following chapter, we highlight the weaknesses of the historical concert and discuss possible obstacles for a concert approach in our time.

Chapter 3 – Obstacles, difficulties, lessons to be learned

3.1 The downsides of the European Concert and lessons to be learned

Although the Concert of Europe boasted important achievements, it included a number of negative experiences and outcomes as well. Abuses of power and norm violations were not uncommon, and members often tried to exploit the Concert for their own interests. In such cases, however, the respective norm violation was usually met with resistance by fellow Concert members. One could generally state, however, that the great powers observed the majority of the norms most of the time for at least one generation. Smaller states were excluded and therefore lacked a voice in decision-making and international law-making. Furthermore, the Concert of Europe denied independence to a number of previously legitimate actors (most notably Poland) on account of the territorial interests of certain concert members. The same holds true for large parts of the world that were regarded as lying outside the sphere of European diplomacy and where the rules and norms of the Concert were not deemed to apply. The legitimacy of the Concert of Europe also suffered from the secrecy of its negotiations and from the fact that conference protocols were either published with delay or not at all.

The wars of unification in Germany and Italy shook the Concert for a time, but a return to conference diplomacy after 1871 was evidence to the remarkable robustness of the institution. Its role became increasingly problematic, however, during the last decades of the 19th century. In regards to the Oriental question, Africa, and China, the Concert became an instrument of a “Great Game” of the imperial powers. In this period, imperialism increasingly undermined the norms established by the Concert of Europe, eventually contributing to its collapse. The Congress of Berlin in 1878 re-introduced the 18th century practice of distributing the spoils of war among interested powers. At the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885, a strict legal separation between the society of so-called “civilized states” and the zones outside of this sphere was introduced. This pseudo-legal device legalized, according to European rationale, the appropriation of territories outside of Europe by predatory imperial powers. This “double standard” permitted major variations in European state practice in various regions in which European states acted. It goes without saying that this practice could and must not be emulated today.

The source of Concert of Europe’s eventual decay rested in a double challenge to the common identity driven by the growing divergence of values and by the emergence of nationalism. Two of the members, England and France, continued to develop in a liberal direction while Austria, Russia, and Prussia (later Germany), in contrast, remained more autocratic. Furthermore, nationalism, which reflected the rise of the lower and middle classes in the course of modernization, grew among the populations of all powers and was manipulated by ruling elites to maintain the legitimacy of their rule. Other factors also had an impact on undercutting the Concert: Imperial rivalry, for example, reached its epitome in the 19th century, thereby complicating concert diplomacy. Developments in military technology played a role as well, spurring new arms races, sharpening a security dilemma between the great powers. Its decay notwithstanding, the Concert of Europe did not wane quickly; it retained some form until the July crisis of 1914, when an all-embracing general war broke out in Europe.

On the whole, the historical experience of both the accomplishments as well as the failures thus suggests that we may use the Concert of Europe as an inspiration rather than as a model for a 21st Century Concert. Still, there are some crucial lessons to be pointed out: A certain level of basic common interest is needed in order to motivate great power concerts. In the 19th century, the fresh memory of the Napoleonic Wars acted as catalyst for this. Today, there exists quite a different foundation for commonality: global interdependence and the daunting risk of a major war fought with the use of contemporary military technology. Furthermore, even though the Concert of Eu-

rope was capable of bringing quite disparate actors together, it crumbled when ideological and politico-cultural differences became unbearable. As today's great powers present much broader cultural diversity than their predecessors in the 19th century, well-devised precautionary measures have to be taken to ensure that this does not repeat itself. This is especially important considering another factor. The Concert of Europe was not universally popular and attracted opposition from non-state actors throughout its existence with democratic movements at odds with Concert diplomacy. Today, a large portion of potential concert power governments are accountable to their voters and must assent to the practices of their executives in multilateral cooperation. Internationally, both civil society and international organizations have emerged as strong voices that must be accommodated by a contemporary group of great powers.

Additionally, *ius ad bellum* remained in existence during the 19th century; therefore, political leaders did not expect the Concert of Europe to rule out war in all cases. As a matter of fact, there were even a few armed conflicts between participants of the Concert. Due to the potential effects even of limited wars in our time, a 21st Century Concert will have to be more ambitious. Concerning legitimacy, just as the doctrine of divine right has faded away, one cannot expect smaller powers to simply accept special rights granted to the great powers today. A 21st Century Concert will thus have to put greater effort into establishing legitimacy and reaching out to non-members than its historical predecessor had. Also, in contrast to the regional scope of the Concert of Europe, a 21st Century Concert would have to be truly global in scope; there could not be any space for expansionist or imperialist impulses. Finally, a 21st Century Concert would have to face a pre-existing world order with established legal rules and institutions, instead of filling a geo-political vacuum.

The primary challenge concerning great power relations and thus the first priority of a modern great power concert is preventing war and conflict *between* its members. This, in turn, might serve as a *precondition* for the solution for existing governance problems throughout the world. The issues of a 21st Century Concert have to be determined accordingly. Its main mission would have to be avoiding hot conflict and creating the *conditions* for broader cooperation by eliminating barriers that result from the security dilemma and specific conflict constellations among the great powers. In order to accomplish this objective, a 21st Century Concert must also master the challenge of ongoing power shifts and ensure the smooth emergence of a multi-polar power structure and perhaps even peaceful power transition at the top of the international order. These tasks and challenges are new: during the entire period of the Concert of Europe, its structure was always multi-polar; but, as today, there were vast differences between the strongest (Great Britain, Russia) and weakest (Prussia, Austria) concert members. While the previous Concert did not have to deal with a literal power transition, it did succeed in integrating an erstwhile dissatisfied outsider (France). This is precisely the task a 21st Century Concert would need to handle given current power shifts and the need to satisfy rising powers.

On all accounts, a 21st Century Concert should at least offer an effective answer to the question of war and peace in the service of the international community. It should not merely be a protective reflex through which certain great powers safeguard their positions vis-à-vis other actors, as this would be unviable. In order to ensure this, the 21st Century Concert powers would be well advised to abide by a set of norms, partially deduced from the Concert of Europe and partially newly developed for the 21st century (which we elaborate on in the Chapter 6).

3.2 Destructive scenarios

But even if the shortcomings of the 19th Century concert are carefully considered and painstakingly avoided, there are certain scenarios that could a) hinder the establishment of a 21st Century Concert, b) complicate its proceedings, or c) threaten its ongoing existence.

One possible scenario involves the refusal of some or all key actors to join a modern concert. States may refuse to join in fear that the Concert would interfere in their internal affairs. In this regard, China and Russia would potentially question the imperative to participate. The greatest related danger, however, concerns the strongest power, the United States: Regardless of which party is in office, Washington will continue to prefer relying on its own strength. America's grand strategy still operates according to the logic of primacy. As such, the US is likely to favor bilateral solutions for some time to come. If a modern concert is to succeed, all these fears would first have to be assuaged.

As the historical concert was never popular with the democratic movements of the time, one could also imagine public opposition to concert diplomacy by political parties, leaders and civil society groupings. Like the anti-globalization or "occupy" movements, such opposition might not be bound to a specific country but be of transnational or even global scope. The design of a new concert could help mitigate these risks in two ways. First, explicit recognition by great powers that they owe special responsibilities to the whole international community, matched by recognition by lesser powers of that responsibility, will give the Concert legitimacy. Second, the relative informality of a concert would help insulate great power consultation from public pressures of existing multilateral fora. A successful great power concert will also require leaders to recognize the domestic pressures that each of them faces.

A modern concert would have to exhibit greater inclusion than its European predecessor; however, as membership will not be universal, a degree of exclusiveness cannot be avoided. This might lead, in turn, to a revolt of the excluded, which could manifest itself in various ways. Possible settings range from the neoconservative nightmare of an "axis of evil" to a coalition of powerful "almost concert" powers or an alternative "southern" concert of developing countries.

Another lesson apparent from the Concert of Europe is that the Concert – when it was already in decline – could not prevent the emergence of two power blocs in Europe that stood at odds with one another. Block-building *within* a modern concert (for example democracies vs. non-democracies, or non-Western vs. Western) could seriously impair its chances for success.

While such block-building could escalate into a major clash, a less violent but still unfortunate scenario would be the Concert not being able to achieve anything at all. If the Concert were not able to "deliver", even early enthusiasts might lose their interest in this new institution and it could fade into obscurity.

Such a failure to deliver might have several causes, though two of them deserve special attention. One would be the appearance of rogue leaders within concert powers that could interfere with concert diplomacy. Another would include vastly differing commitment among the various concert members. A concert would depend on mutual readiness to contribute to great power multilateralism; such readiness cannot be assumed if only a minority of members were to attend meetings regularly.

Problems would also arise if a newly established concert clashed with the UNSC, as both institutions claim responsibility for questions of war and peace. The UNSC is not, however, the sole exist-

ing institution concerned with questions of international security. Many regional organizations, not to mention the global G8, also aim at stabilizing the international system, preserving peace and mitigating conflicts. Overlap between such organizations and a modern concert, if handled with care, could prove fruitful, but it may also lead to suspicion and conflicts of authority.

Taking these obstacles into account, they clearly fall into one of two categories: Some of them may simply be fate, without the possibility of intervention; but, the vast majority represents contingencies – some of higher, some of lower probability –, which one can and should prepare for. Though they cannot be eliminated then or from the outset, they can certainly be mitigated to some degree. We shall therefore keep them in mind in the following chapters that deal with the membership, norms and procedures of a 21st Century Concert.

Chapter 4 – What should the criteria for membership be?

Who should be included in such an arrangement of great power security cooperation in the context of a strengthened framework of global multilateralism? A multilateral great power arrangement will have to involve established and emerging powers alike; on the other hand, it must also engage states who have at least some initial international leadership potential. Avoiding global *common bads* presupposes the mobilization of collective efforts, including some form of global burden-sharing. Hence, participants involved in a great power concert should, at least in principle, be expected to rise to a position of providing political stewardship. In discussing an appropriate composition for the Concert in the foreseeable future, we are, of course, aware that future changes might necessitate reconstitutions of membership. It will rest with the Concert, once established, to provide for co-optation and other changes of membership.

4.1 General criteria for participation in great power multilateralism

Against this background, two key requirements guiding the selection of which states should be included can be identified; both are attempts to avoid criticism increasingly targeted at the current UNSC. First, a multilateral great power arrangement should avoid a mismatch with the *current* global power structure and thus include those states that either already play or are likely to play a decisive role in *contemporary* world affairs. Second, this arrangement should avoid any regional or cultural imbalance. The first criterion concerns the efficiency and the second the legitimacy of a 21st Century Concert.

4.1.1 Influence in world affairs: potential, willingness, impact, recognition

Four criteria are critical for the first requirement. Foremost, an actor should either already command or be in the position of acquiring sufficient economic, military and/or political power in order to contribute to the production of international order. Second, even an actor endowed with high power potential will not exert this power if it lacks the willingness to do so, and, in many cases, willingness might depend on popular support. A case in point was the US during its isolationist phase after World War I or Russia in the 1990s – in contrast to the globalist aspirations of a collapsed Soviet Union, the new Russia reduced its role to that of a regional power. A clearly articulated, or at least unambiguously visible, “desire to be counted”, i.e. an ambition to exert influence in the international system and be(come) a player of global reach, is thus the second criterion for becoming eligible to participate in great power multilateralism. Third, the country should have a tangible impact globally, or at least in its region. Fourth, a degree of international recognition that the actor’s interests should be taken into account in order to produce a stable international order must also be present. After all, power is a social category involving the legitimacy to speak from different perspectives and to be important and relevant for solving current and potential issues. Such recognition will most likely result from a state’s economic, military or political power as well as its perceived readiness to work for the common good.

How do we apply these criteria to the real world? Among the most common indicators for power potential are the size of territory and population. A state’s economic power can be measured most simply by its GNP, as it better reflects its economic position in the global economy than GDP and includes the value added by the country’s citizens and companies abroad. Membership in the G20 indicates that a state is recognized by its peers as key players in the world economy, thus signalling both economic power and recognition. Military potential does not necessitate the possession of nu-

clear weapons; rather, it concerns an actor's general ability to yield military power, including projecting it within its own region or participating in operations of global reach; the simplest measure for such a potential is military expenditure. A state's political power is judged in terms of regional centrality. A state must also, certainly, function effectively; a highly instable state would not be in a position to perform its role as a member of a concert of powers. We use the participation in UN-mandated and UN-led operations as an indicator of the willingness of a state to put its resources at the service of the common interest (though a state might pursue national interests at the same time), and election into the UN Security Council as a sign of both the readiness of the elected state to take on global responsibilities as well as an indicator of international recognition. As we are interested in the current situation, we count the periods when a country was a permanent or elected non-permanent member of the UNSC since 1990 and look at the earlier period simply to rank states that have equal scores in UNSC participation in the years after 1990. The P-5, all of which have proven their ambition to act as world powers time and again, rank high on this criterion due to their permanent membership.

We take a criterion as met when a state globally ranks among the top fifteen states. In order to fulfil the influence requirement, it could be advisable for any state scoring on more than half of the eight criteria to be made a concert member.

These suggested criteria are by no means final or exclusive; additional or alternative criteria must be constantly sought out and considered by the international community. For example, another potential criterion for electing members to the new concert of powers concerns *performance* (or actual *achievements and efficiency*). Performance as a criterion takes "real" results and achievements of economic, political, cultural activities of states into consideration. Such results should not be of local or regional but rather global significance. This criterion might be necessary for complementing the criteria of willingness of elites and people to play a greater role in international development. There are always "young" or "emerging" powers that have high aspirations without yet having achieved significant results or influenced global developments in proportions required to qualify for membership in a concert. The utilization of such a comparative criterion may temporarily disqualify some candidates for immediate membership in a global concert. Performance should ideally result in *recognition* from the international community; but the connection between achieved results and international recognition is not a direct one. There are examples of high national economic performance not being supplemented by political recognition. The performance criterion captures the objective power and maturity of a global actor, while the recognition criterion requires the subjective readiness of the international community to accept an emerging actor as a participant in global governance. An assessment of actual efficiency and of effective contribution to global governance makes the selection of state members to a future concert more complicated. At the same time, these criteria may help make selection more balanced and more clearly detail reasons for exclusion of some powers and inclusion of others. Nevertheless, the imperative to acquire legitimacy through regional balance will require the inclusion of states with more regional than global weight.

4.1.2 International legitimacy: the need for balanced participation

One feature that has plagued existing international institutions in the past, not least the UNSC, has been the imbalance among global regions, with a strong preponderance of the industrialized states, notably from the West. An additional criterion guiding the selection of participants in great power multilateralism based on legitimacy considerations should therefore include a reasonable balance of regions. Balance includes three aspects: First, states from the world's major *regions* should have a

place at the table. Second, the world's major *cultures and civilizations*, in particular the world's major religions, should be able to participate via a concert member in which that religion constitutes the majority. Third, the multilateral arrangement as a whole should encompass states that, taken together, include a clear majority of the *world's population*. Candidates eligible for reasons of balance should also satisfy the power, ambition and recognition criteria to a suitable degree.

4.2 Potential participants in a 21st Century Concert of Powers

The following table gives an overview of which states (plus the EU, see below) meet which criteria: population, territory, GNP, membership in the G-20, military expenditure, periods in the UNSC since 1990, participation in UN-led peacekeeping missions since 1990, and the central position in a region (measured by these criteria).¹ Only three actors, the EU, Brazil and India, score in all eight categories. The US, Russia, and China fulfill seven criteria, and Japan, Indonesia, Mexico and Saudi Arabia five each. We have decided to rank the EU as a whole and to eschew including the individual members in our ranking. Otherwise several EU members would have scored on several indicators and might claim inclusion. However, none of the EU states is clearly dominant and the inclusion of all of them would have resulted in a regional imbalance. It should also be noted that EU member states have differing strengths and weaknesses, making the strength of one able to compensate for the weakness of the other, with none dominating in all dimensions.

As shown in Chapter 1, China, India, Russia and the US are connected by intertwined conflicting and cooperative relations that endow them with a particular potential for damage, placing particular responsibility on their shoulders to help sustain world peace. Furthermore, the four states have clearly articulated their ambition to exert greater international influence and to be (or become) a player of global reach. Finally, despite misgivings on the part of some states, such as regarding the domestic situation in China and Russia or the perceived imperial behaviour by the US, it is obvious that these actors' interests have to be taken into account in order to create a stable international order: They are indispensable to the Concert's function of preventing major great power conflict. Each of them is the predominant actor in its regional environment, North America, South Asia and East Asia, while Russia is the dominant power in two regions, Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

¹ Certainly, different criteria or another operationalization could have been chosen. We believe, however, that our approach covers the most important dimensions of the capability to function as a member of a great power concert.

Country	Population	Territory	GNP	Member of G20	Military expenditure	Peace keeping	UNSC periods	Centrality in region	Total no. of matches
<i>Powers achieving more than four indicators</i>									
Brazil	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	8
European Union	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	8
India	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	8
China	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	7
Russia	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	7
USA	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	7
Indonesia	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	5
Japan	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	5
Mexico	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	5
Saudi Arabia	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	5
<i>Powers considered for reasons of regional balance</i>									
South Africa	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	4
Australia	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	4
Egypt	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	2
<i>Powers, considered for reasons of their considerable potential</i>									
Canada	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	4
Argentina	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	4
Turkey	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	3
South Korea	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	3
<i>Powers not considered due to high internal instability</i>									
Nigeria	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	3
Pakistan	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	3

The EU, as a whole, possesses tremendous power resources given its population, large military, economic power potential, and its proactivity in diplomacy, not only through its member states but also, in some fields, as a collective actor. However, despite progress in its Common Foreign and Security Policy, it is frequently plagued by a lack of unity and by an inability to speak with one voice. This negatively affects both the ambition and the recognition criteria: deficits with respect to the former stem from the inability to adopt unambiguous foreign policy positions. Corresponding deficits with respect to the latter can be attributed to the lack of a well-defined addressee of such international perceptions. Hence, as long as the EU remains unable to speak with one voice, it will not be on a par with the four great powers discussed above. Yet keeping the EU completely out of a great power arrangement would also be undesirable, as it would exclude a major portion of the western, central and southern European regions and thus aggravate the problems of imbalance. Substituting a joint European engagement through the participation of individual European states, in particular France, Germany and the United Kingdom, does not present a viable alternative. Despite Britain and France's continued attachment to their self-images of world power and despite Germany's relative economic strength and half-hearted effort to obtain a permanent UNSC seat, all three are no more than middle powers, hosting moderately sized populations, and none of them dominates the European region. Granting the "European" spot in a great power arrangement to any

one of these three countries might furthermore create animosities that could endanger instead of foster European integration. Attempting to mitigate intra-European competition by including all three (or even four, counting Italy) would even exacerbate the imbalance which is a major point of contention concerning the UNSC. Only Europe as a whole, fully using the institutions of the Lisbon Treaty that allow for a truly common foreign and security policy, would therefore be an acceptable member of a great power arrangement. There is no doubt that this is a difficult issue for the UK and France. But they might find some consolation in the fact that the structure of the UNSC, where formal decision-making would continue to be made, would remain unchanged for the time being. By its legal and administrative structure, the EU is the world's only regional organization which – in light of the confederative nature of its treaties and its deep institutional setting, including a High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and a foreign service – would be able to fulfil the required qualities of an actor. As long as member states do not fully utilize this legal basis, the EU will remain included for the sake of the regional balance of a multilateral arrangement. However, the EU would have to decide on the way in which (and by whom) it will be represented; this arrangement might help improve its collective agency.

Brazil and Japan are highly significant states in terms of potential and ambition. While Brazil is expected to be the fourth largest global economy by 2050 and currently dominates the South America region, Japan, though having lost its status as the world's second largest economy to China, will continue to be among the ten leading world economies for the foreseeable future. Furthermore, Japan's decline has not yet prompted the country to abandon its global ambitions, despite the fact that it is overshadowed by two great powers in the region. Similarly, on the other side of the globe, elites and public opinion in Brazil largely agree that their country should play a more significant role internationally, less by means of military capability than through economic and diplomatic channels; its outstanding position in South America certainly adds to such a perception. Indonesia houses the largest Muslim population in the world and is a pivotal member of ASEAN in one of the world's most dynamic regions. Its role at the table is congruent with the country's self-image of being a bridge between the West and Islam as well as its ambitions as a global player. Mexico is an emerging economic power with a particular commitment to global multilateralism and occupies an outstanding position in Central America. Saudi Arabia, a Muslim "flagship state", is a remarkable economic power (including its significant share in the world market of the most traded natural resource, oil) and ranks above all the other states in the region of the Middle East, including Iran, in terms of our criteria.

To confine the Concert to the states that satisfy five or more of our criteria alone, however, would lead to a regional and cultural imbalance that should be avoided, as we have elaborated above. Suitable candidates with less than five matches should be added for the sake of avoiding such an imbalance, one that would most surely otherwise lead to a legitimacy gap. In order to remedy the regional imbalance concerning North Africa, the only state from this region scoring on two criteria, Egypt – the most populous Arab state and close to meeting the population criterion, where it ranks 16th – should be included.² As far as Sub Saharan Africa is concerned, the brittle statehood of Nigeria, which figures among the 25 states in the world closest to failure, leaves only one appropriate concert candidate that qualifies with four criteria and is stronger than all of its regional competitors: South Africa. It is also noteworthy that South Africa has been elected in the UNSC two times after the overthrow of the Apartheid regime and thereby just merely misses a fifth indicator. Another region without a member thus far is Oceania. Australia would be a suitable candidate for this region, meeting four of our suggested criteria.

² This assumes that the problems of instability in Egypt will prove temporary and that a measure of stability will return in the near future.

Six other countries also come close to the threshold, with three or four matches: Argentina, Canada, Turkey, the Republic of Korea, Pakistan and Nigeria. Of these six, the last two do not qualify due to their critical status in terms of “internal instability”. The other four must carefully be considered: Adding these states would, on the one hand, maximize the Concert’s combined economic and military potential. On the other hand, it could lead to further regional imbalances. Turkey might be discussed as a candidate in light of its role as a (geographic) bridge between Europe, the Arab world and Central Asia, but all of these regions possess stronger concert members as it is. Canada’s inclusion would lead to a pro-North American imbalance, as this region is already represented by the predominant United States. The Republic of Korea would count as the third East Asian state – another imbalance. Taking Argentina on might tilt the balance too much in favor of South America. As such, the advantages and disadvantages of adding these states would have to be evaluated carefully.

Concert of 10 (candidates that achieve more than 4 indicators)	Concert of 13 (expanded for reasons of regional balance)	Concert of 17 (including threshold powers)
Brazil	Brazil	Brazil
China	China	China
European Union	European Union	European Union
India	India	India
Indonesia	Indonesia	Indonesia
Japan	Japan	Japan
Mexico	Mexico	Mexico
Russia	Russia	Russia
Saudi Arabia	Saudi Arabia	Saudi Arabia
USA	USA	USA
	Egypt	Egypt
	Australia	Australia
	South Africa	South Africa
		Argentina
		Canada
		South Korea
		Turkey
60% of world population	61% of world population	65% of world population
72% of world GNP	74% of world GNP	80% of world GNP
80% of world military spending	82% of world military spending	86% of world military spending

We are then left with three options: First, a concert with ten members that meet more than 50% of the criteria: the US, the EU, Russia, China, India, Japan, Indonesia, Brazil, Mexico and Saudi Arabia. Second, in order to give priority to regional and cultural balance, Australia, Egypt and South Africa would be added, enlarging the number of members to thirteen. In regional terms, Europe would be represented by two actors (the EU and Russia), the Middle East by two (Saudi Arabia, and Egypt), North and Sub-Saharan Africa by one each (Egypt and South Africa), North, Central and South America by one each (the US, Mexico, and Brazil), Central Asia and the Caucasus by one (Russia) South Asia by one (India), Southeast Asia by one (Indonesia), East Asia by two (China and Japan), and Oceania by one (Australia). The double counting reflects the bridging role of Egypt and

Russia between regions. Third, if we were to relax the regional imbalance perspective and put more weight on economic and military potential, concert membership might rise to seventeen states, adding Turkey, Argentina, Canada and the Republic of Korea.

All regions are to a greater or lesser degree represented by all constellations, as are the major cultures and religions. Altogether, the proposed candidates account for between 4.2 billion people or about 60% of the world's population, in a Concert of ten, and nearly 4.6 billion people or about 65% of the world's population, in a Concert of seventeen. This would encompass 72% (ten members) to 80% (seventeen members) of the global GNP, and 80% (ten members) to 86% (seventeen members) of global military spending.

4.3 Do the participating states desire great power multilateralism?

Before entering into new arrangement aimed at improving global security governance, these countries would, of course, all thoroughly deliberate and carefully weigh costs and benefits, risks and opportunities. However, none of the four most crucial powers appears to hold fundamental or insurmountable objections to becoming part of such an arrangement. At the same time, they are most likely to raise concerns regarding their own specific role in a concert as well its design and *modus operandi*.

Russia would probably be eager to participate in a system of great power multilateralism, not least because such participation would allow it to reassert its self-image as a world power. Yet it would want to make sure that such an arrangement does not threaten its privileges as a veto power in the UNSC. Furthermore, Russia might stress the need for integration of the role of regional organizations for conflict prevention within a multilateral great power structure. Finally, Russia would push for the strict observance of a principle of sovereign equality within the arrangement, irrespective of a country's regime type or internal conduct.

India would potentially be concerned about the extent to which its participation in any great power concert would diminish its chances of becoming a permanent member in the UNSC. Consequently, it might initially question the need for another arrangement outside of the UN. At the same time, India would be utterly opposed to a new arrangement to its exclusion (Brazil and Japan might share similar attitudes). While only accepting participation as an equal partner, the country would not take a leading role in a great power concert for some time. India might be more comfortable with an arrangement focusing on soft rather than on hard security; it would insist on ruling out any discussion of its internal security and, most likely, its bilateral conflicts with Pakistan and differences with China.

Like India and Russia, China would probably demand due respect for the principle of non-intervention. Yet China would not be opposed to participating in great power multilateralism, since it is becoming increasingly aware of its indispensable role in the international arena. It maintains that it understands the dangers associated with international power shifts and has declared that it only wants to pursue a "peaceful rise" to great power status. China's new leadership is now proposing to forge "a new type of relations with other great powers". According to Chinese sources, the meaning of this "new type of great power relations" is quite compatible with great power multilateralism or a concert of powers. This general inclination towards great power cooperation might also be derived from its increased engagement in multilateral settings.

Among the “big four”, the US may be the most problematic participant. Entering the Concert would mean acquiescing its status as number one in the end. True multilateralism requires listening, empathy and willingness to compromise. This would imply a considerable departure from past US practice. Great power cooperation would also face strong, perhaps even insurmountable, obstacles if a Republican-led administration were in power, comprised of strong proponents of unilateralism. Objectively, on the other hand, the US does not have reason to be completely averse to the idea of establishing some form of multilateral great power arrangement. Given the fact that America’s resources to project power abroad are diminishing, the country is being compelled to look for new partners in burden sharing. Consequently, many in the country’s political elite perceive readjustment in the international system towards the rise of emerging powers as a matter of essential interest. In general, the US would prefer a more fluid and informal arrangement enabling it to opt out, if necessary. Should the US elite become strongly averse to the idea of “concertation”, great power multilateralism would most probably be doomed – but so would global security governance as such, with dire consequences for the rest of the world.

Finally, the EU would probably be prepared to become part of a great power arrangement, not least due to its general preference for multilateral approaches. This would occur if the accession of individual member states was ruled out and the misgivings of current EU permanent UNSC members could be overcome. An important issue for the EU would be the type of commitment that would come to life by joining the club. Preoccupied with bringing its own house back into order, the EU is likely to be reluctant in investing significant resources, at least in the near future. For the other countries, one may surmise that the recognition afforded by the invitation for membership would provide an irresistible incentive to accede, and participate actively, provided they would not be accorded second-class status.

4.4 Concluding thoughts on membership

It would, of course, be possible to enlarge the number of criteria or to use different definitions of “region” for our purposes here, likely ending up with varying group compositions. In addition to the criteria discussed above, the Concert would, for example, be strengthened if members were to prove their capacity to perform international leadership positions in global negotiations, international regimes and regional contexts. As for our “top ten” candidates, such achievements already exist; for the three permanent UNSC members – the US, China and Russia – this statement is evident. Compared with the United States and Russia, China is just beginning to demonstrate its increasing assertiveness in international disputes (for example regarding Syria). China has recently developed an approach to international disputes termed “Chinese Style” that emphasizes sustainability and gradualism. The EU can point to the leadership roles of its member states France and UK with permanent seats in the UN Security Council and, pertaining to the EU as a whole, within the WTO and international environmental negotiations. Likewise, Japan has played a pivotal role in both the WTO and the IMF. Brazil has been instrumental in ending the Washington Consensus and has established the creative norm of “responsibility while protecting”. India has, for many years, been a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement. Its role in negotiating the compromise on the “Responsibility to Protect” has been central, and it is an important actor in global trade and climate change negotiations. Mexico has been the front runner among the non-nuclear weapon states for nuclear disarmament and a ban on testing in particular. Indonesia has been one of the leaders of the NAM and has steered ASEAN on the path to reform, including its systematic influence in Burma for modernization and change. In recent years, Saudi Arabia has played a major role in the League of Arab states and has united the League behind the King Abdullah Peace Plan for the Middle

East. It has been the decisive voice in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries for forty years now. Achievements on the regional or global scene can thus be ascribed to all of the top ten.

As such, the three options discussed above appear to reflect today's situation quite reasonably, and certainly better than the UNSC. They also contain enough actors with the ability to build relationships with states more skeptical of a great power arrangement and/or past historic ties with actors viewed as problematic from the perspective of the envisaged arrangement. It should be noted that as the plausibility of the UNSC's composition has changed considerably between 1945 and today, so too might the Concert's in the distant future – regardless of which option should be chosen. A degree of openness in regards to changing membership is therefore necessary. Nevertheless, however the group should be composed, there will always be a majority of states that do not have a place at the table; the exclusion issue will linger on permanently, and it must be handled with utmost care.

Chapter 5 – How to mitigate the exclusion problem

A 21st Century Concert would be an exclusive body, having limited membership. It would, however, deliberate in order to forge common positions on issues that tend to affect the international community as a whole. There is thus no question that this exclusiveness, which, by nature, means the exclusion of the rest, is a serious and risky feature that could lead to frustration, resentment and even resistance, thereby undermining the objectives of a peaceful order the Concert is meant to promote. Exclusiveness violates the sense of fairness which rests on the principle that those affected by what others do should have a say before positions are taken that might impact their interests. It also violates the very basic principle of minimum justice among states that informs the notion – however symbolic and fictitious – of sovereign equality. There have been discouraging experiences with the consequences of exclusiveness. The distrust of the non-aligned world towards the exclusive export control “clubs”, such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group, is notorious and lasting, and it has had a negative effect on the group’s effectiveness. Still, if we wish for the great powers to work together to avoid major conflict and facilitate governance for the sake of the common good, some degree of exclusiveness cannot be avoided. The point remains that if the exclusion problem is not dealt with carefully by a 21st Century Concert, it might produce highly undesirable effects.

5.1 Legitimacy and justice

Acknowledging the problem should not mean exaggerating it out of proportion. We have to recall that positions in almost every global multilateral negotiation are taken on the initiative of small and exclusive groups that work out the compromises eventually adopted by all; even the UNGA and the Non-Aligned Movement do not deviate from this pattern. It is always the common initiative of the few that eventually supplies a solution for all. The international community as such is not completely averse to a degree of self-delegated, exclusive representation – provided the result is positive for the broad international community and thus satisfactory. In order to be acceptable, the practices of a 21st Century Concert must meet the criteria of legitimacy. After all, inequality is less objectionable when it is perceived as legitimate. Legitimacy, in turn, is closely connected to justice. This entails two aspects: Output legitimacy results from the perception that practices yield results that are not detrimental but rather useful, effective *and* satisfy minimum standards of distributive justice to which most members of the international community agree. Input legitimacy, on the other hand, requires a minimum degree of procedural justice, i.e. affected actors should be granted adequate opportunity to have their views and demands heard.

The way we generally propose to construct the composition and objectives of a 21st Century Concert contains in it some features meant to mitigate the exclusion problem and contribute to the body’s legitimacy. First, a 21st Century Concert is to begin as an informal, deliberative body without preempting the positions of legally authorized bodies such as the UNSC (see Chapter 7). This modest ambition lowers the requirements for legitimacy, since the Concert itself would not claim any formal right of infringing on other states’ affairs. Second, the list of membership criteria that was previously introduced, including factors such as the a country’s population and a consideration of regional balance, will make a 21st Century Concert significantly more balanced than the UNSC is today and or will be in the foreseeable future. A majority of the world’s population, the vast majority of world cultures and all world regions would have a seat at the table; Western, industrialized states would not be privileged over developing countries. In fact, the latter states would constitute the majority in a 21st Century Concert. Since balance is an important aspect of input legitimacy, the Concert – as proposed by this study – would, at least, be an improvement on the status quo.

5.2 Strategies tailored to different types of states

The international community is composed of very different types of states. This variety impacts the exclusion issue. For our purposes, the most salient distinction between states relates to their ability to project influence, as outlined in Chapter 4. In order to further specify how the exclusion issue may best be handled, methods for enhancing legitimacy in the perception of various state actors will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

5.2.1 Small states

First, there is the large number of small and very small states which do not score prominently based on our criteria. Countries whose population add up to no more than 5% of the globe's total comprise more than half of UNGA's membership. It can be presumed – and inferred from the acquiescence in small group compromise-building during global negotiations – that they would be content with delegating positions, provided that some basic conditions are met. First, positions and actions taken by the Concert should not be carried out in an unbalanced way, at their expense or in violation of their vital interests; the “no harm” principle is the minimum condition for acquiescence. Acceptance would be even greater if positions/actions by the few actually (and tangibly) mitigated harm, and best if they contributed to the common good. Altogether, this indicates that the substance of positions/actions must not violate a fundamental understanding of distributive justice. Should this condition be observed, “output legitimacy” for a 21st Century Concert would be created in the eyes of the small states, as the Concert's actions/positions will be deemed acceptable or even useful and efficient.

As noted, it may be expected that small states will remain modest in their ambitions for participating in common deliberations. There are at least two ways in which this ambition could be heeded. First, a selected member of the Concert could address the UNGA at its annual session on the proceedings of the group, inviting all ambassadors to a “side event” running parallel to the UNGA at which all members could comment on the report. The Concert could make a point to explicitly encourage the UNGA to take a position on critical issues of peace and security, as outlined in more detail in Chapter 7. Second, in the run-up to the annual summit meeting of a 21st Century Concert, members could utilize regional groupings in which they participate for consulting on the concert's agenda. Regional organizations have considerable potential and interest in assuming greater responsibility for their respective regions; having a venue for input at the deliberations of a 21st Century Concert would certainly support that purpose.

Small states may see a particular need to create their own associations regarding special issues – such as the AOSIS group that consists of small island states particularly threatened by rising sea levels. A 21st Century Concert would be well advised to include the representatives of such groups when – in the case that the Concert develops beyond the topic of security – these special issues are on its agenda.

5.2.2 Middle powers

These two approaches would likewise be appropriate for addressing the second group of states: middle powers that strive to have a “voice” but do not demand presence at the table themselves.

A more concerted effort by the members of a 21st Century Concert from the respective regions would be necessary to satisfy these larger claims. Additional bilateral talks at the sidelines of regional organization meetings (a practice long used by ASEAN, for example) or supplementary meetings with one or several Concert members’ “sherpa” in the capital of the country concerned would suffice to afford a middle power the required sense of recognition and ownership.

It should be noted that not all states are covered by regional organizations. Israel and Iran are not, nor are Mongolia or the two Koreas.³ Switzerland would also be left to the OSCE. In these cases, the best-suited concert members could be tasked with conducting regular consultations with the country concerned (e.g. the US with Israel or India with Iran).

5.2.3 Important powers not included in a 21st Century Concert

The most difficult exclusion issue concerns states that just miss membership candidacy, do not score high enough on the introduced dimensions, reside in a region where a 21st Century Concert member “dwarfs” the next larger power, or are too close to state failure to contribute to international security. For this relatively small group of important regional powers, consultations should be frequent and should not just involve the regional concert member but also other members of the Concert. The vital interests of these countries should be carefully taken into account when a 21st Century Concert conducts its deliberations. An informal rule may also develop stating that a concert member from the region would not announce its candidacy for election as a non-permanent member of the UNSC if one of these countries declares its candidacy. The result of collectively courting important states should be a sense of “ownership without membership”. One should bear in mind that there is the possibility for opening the Concert to a new member if the new member meets the given criteria and its rising power indicates the need for integration into the group.

5.2.4 States with particular problems

Finally, there is a small group of states that exhibit particular problems. First, there are those who are under sanctions by the UNSC or found to be in breach of major security-relevant commitments by the relevant international authority. The behavior of these states is difficult to reconcile with the Concert’s core idea of establishing and helping uphold a rule-based international order. Furthermore, there are those countries which might be engaged in a particularly serious conflict with a specific concert member. These two groups of countries obviously belong in different categories; while the first sub-group is responsible for major violations of international law and are not in good standing with their obligations to the international community, the second group may simply be in the unfortunate position of being at odds with a great power. What both types of countries do have in common, however, is that, in light of their highly conflict-laden relation to (individual) concert members, they require special attention of the Concert. Damage mitigation in this regard would probably be the best result that a 21st Century Concert can achieve.

In such cases, concert members should try to avoid conflict escalation and mitigate tensions with those states. They should likewise reduce threat levels and express principled guarantees of exis-

³ If we do not count as a sufficient venues the Six Party Talks concerned with the North Korean nuclear problem, the ASEAN Regional Forum, the APEC or observer status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

tence, granted that these states do not put international peace and security at risk. In so doing, the Concert could also offer the opportunity for certain members to engage in voluntary and non-binding mediation. Furthermore, regular consultations should be maintained by those concert members who have the best relations with the country in question. For notorious rule-breakers, deemed to be endangering international peace and security by all in the Concert, a 21st Century Concert would practice containment, and, as a last resort, endorse Chapter VII measures in the UNSC. Should significant progress be observed in regard to law abidance by or easing of tensions with the state in question, the Concert's relations to these states would be adapted accordingly.

5.3 Concluding thoughts on legitimacy as mitigated exclusion

The legitimacy of a 21st Century Concert in the eyes of those who are non-members depends largely on the Concert's positive and useful work, its clear links to inclusive multilateral institutions, and on an adequate, multidimensional and differentiated set of opportunities for making all states' voices heard. The measures outlined above are designed to meet this requirement: Given the informal character of the Concert, regular and multidimensional consultations – if they are taken seriously by those involved – would seem to be an adequate instrument for mitigating the most damaging consequences of exclusion. More sophisticated mechanisms for granting ownership to the excluded will be necessary once the Concert becomes better established or even decides to assume decision-making powers. Institutional bridges to the UN system are obviously required: The main decisions taken by Concert must be explicitly endorsed by law-based multilateral institutions. Such a system will work similarly to the current mode of operation of the G8, whose heads of state reconfirm decisions elaborated and negotiated at informal G8 summits through institutionalized decisions of “traditional” multilateral institutions like the UN, World Trade Organization, World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

It goes without saying that the legitimacy of a 21st Century Concert also critically depends on the norm-compliant behavior of the concert members themselves. Great powers cannot excuse themselves from following the rules which they demand that others to abide by. This requirement, of course, does not preclude the possibility of consensually adjusting these rules in order to ensure the effectiveness of the Concert. Nevertheless, much will still depend on items discussed elsewhere in this paper, namely: the behavior of members of a 21st Century Concert in and toward their respective regions; their prudent behavior in crises; their restraint in using force; and their respectful attitude, individually and collectively, towards the formal institutions and these institutions' legally prescribed procedures for taking binding decisions. The *modus operandi* of a 21st Century Concert thus takes on particular importance. Additionally, the main issues at stake during concert deliberations will often be conflicts involving weak states. Those must be coupled to all talks which have direct implications for them on an ad hoc basis. This method is to be preferred over contact groups that exclude regional and local actors.

Finally, the symbolism of exclusion can trigger humiliation, breeding resentment, deviant diplomacy and even violence. For these reasons, members of a 21st Century Concert must avoid all forms of symbolic self-enhancement that would set them apart from the rest. They should not refrain from mutual criticism when one or more among them violate agreed-upon norms and rules, notably at the expense of others. They should also exhibit the appropriate degree of humility and respect towards the wider international community.

Chapter 6 – Guiding norms for a 21st Century Concert

Establishing a concert of powers is a challenging undertaking, resulting in the fact that states have very rarely been able to create them. Great power rivalry is still more familiar than great power cooperation on vital matters. For this reason, it must be assumed that a common understanding is required among concert members that would serve as the normative basis on which great power cooperation would unfold. This especially important in case participating powers not exclusively be from only the European region and background, as was in the case of the 19th century Concert, but from different continents, regions and civilizations.

It was the set of shared norms that made the Concert of Europe work (see Chapter 2). Some of these norms were laid down in treaties; others were embedded in continual governmental practices. Thus, whether these normative ideas are encapsulated in tacit understandings, whether they are written down in non-binding communiqués or explicitly laid down in the form of a treaty is not decisive. What matters is that a common understanding exists, guiding the practices of member states, the observation of which reinforces mutual willingness to continue and further deepen norm-guided practices. Establishing a 21st Century Concert may mean revisiting, amending and reforming current international norms, as they still reflect past Western hegemony. Thus, there is a need for working out common norms as guiding standards of appropriate behavior to which all members commit. Such a common approach may be based upon defining shared common values, or it may be based upon common or rationally and mutually recognized pragmatic interests. A 21st Century Concert will most probably only thrive if the norms guiding its practices are a synthesis of Western and non-Western preferences, emerging from open discussions and negotiations among concert members.

In the following section, we will try to elaborate on the norms upon which such great power cooperation could be rooted. Given the present state of affairs, establishing this set of norms clearly entails a major change in the culture of interstate relations. For that reason, it will take time, effort, continuous practice, and learning to widen the scope of joint understandings until the framework of norms can be agreed upon by all members. Negotiating new norms demands considerable concessions in the spirit of compromise. We believe it possible that this change might happen given that current disputes between powers have not yet escalated into irreconcilable antagonism, and the states in question appear to share a desire for stable international relations. This desire could be the foundation for a process of sustainable cooperation. Once the norms have been agreed upon, they will further evolve through practice, and their specific meaning in various circumstances will necessitate repeated clarification and even re-negotiation. This will also be the case should particular norms come into conflict with each other. There is not any formal procedure of adjudication – only the readiness to return to the table and work until a common understanding is achieved will prevent bitter disputes and solidify the Concert as an institution. The guiding norms will thus ultimately have to emerge from the work of the Concert. The set of norms we propose here are thus provisional and illustrative. Only two norms need to be observed as a minimal common denominator at the outset: Acceptance of the need for cooperation, and recognition of the specific responsibility of the great powers for avoiding major conflict.

6.1 Acknowledging the urgency of cooperation

A concert of great powers will only come into being and be able to function if each of the powers' governments understands the need for cooperation and embraces the opportunity for finding win-win strategies in a world of interdependence. This understanding rests on three requirements. First, agreement among all powers is needed based on the urgent necessity of averting *common bads*, starting with the lingering possibility of serious conflict with high escalation risks among them.

Second, the great powers must all share the insight that this objective – the basis of security for all of them – cannot be realized unilaterally, as security must be equal for all. Third, they must all understand that tackling global risks that are detrimental to the welfare of their respective countries will be impossible unless the relationships among great powers favor cooperative attitudes.

6.2 Accepting the responsibility of great powers for the avoidance and overcoming of common bads

Great powers have to accept the fact that, due to their disproportionate capability to inflict damage and the power to do good, coupled with their regional and extra-regional reach, they bear a particular responsibility for the survival and welfare of mankind. If all policy starts from the principle of “do no harm”, then the awareness of their own potential for harmful and their duty to prevent it from being unleashed can be a starting point of cooperation. Accepting the responsibility to prevent harm for the world as a whole rather than merely for one’s own state and its people seems to turn the conventional orientation of governments – that of their national interest – upside down. Indeed, accepting responsibility *erga omnes* would be closely related to an “ethics of care” which has been discussed as the opposite of traditional great power politics. However, upon closer inspection, the two might not be as far removed from one another, at least in their consequences, as one might think.

First, the notion of increasing interdependence, driven by globalization, neutralizes the categorical difference between the security and welfare of “strangers”, including other states, and one’s own. Other states’ concerns relate more and more to one’s own interests even in the realm of “high politics”. Caring for the common fate of mankind is not a purely altruistic action but coincides with a forward-thinking reading of what the national interest under conditions of interdependence actually is. Second, accepting this relation requires a long-term perspective rather than fixating one’s attention only on the next few years (and, for elected leaders, the next election period). The fruits of cooperation and the poisonous results of confrontation frequently come to bear only after a decade, if not further in the future. Third, leaders need to understand that the actions they take lead to (quite often predictable) reactions from their peers. Politics are not equal to engineering in this sense: they do not apply skills to inanimate objects. Politics is a dialectical interaction in which the “objects” pursue their own objectives, follow their own rationales, are guided by their own virtues, and driven by their own interests, perceptions and emotions. Anticipating how others will react to one’s actions requires empathy and foresight, but is indispensable in a prudent strategy that aims to avoid adverse surprises. If the vector that results from action and reaction points in an undesirable direction, it will clearly be wiser to choose a different course from the beginning, one that will not provoke one’s partners to react in an adversarial way. Fourth, the notion of a common good should emerge as a joint understanding within the discourse among the members in order to prevent parochial interpretations of this term. Any deliberation on national strategies in world politics that takes these four aspects into account will lead to accepting global responsibilities with due regard for the opportunities and limits of national capabilities, and regard for preferring cooperative approaches towards other great powers over unilateral and confrontational moves that inexorably lead to suboptimal outcomes, hurting one’s own interests in the long term.

6.3 Symbolic recognition of equality among the great powers

Exhibiting respect for one’s partners is the expression of another indispensable norm guiding relations among great powers: principled equality among them, best understood as “equality before the

law”, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Vast differences in resources and skills might, of course, exist in the real world. But this real-world inequality should be left at the door during concert dealings: for the purposes of a 21st Century Concert, members must recognize each other, and be recognized, as equals. “God’s own country”, the “Middle Kingdom”, the “Third Rome” and other expressions of exceptionalism may be appropriate in the production of self-esteem and national identity, but there is no hierarchy between them and they have no role within a 21st Century Concert.

The desire for recognition as an equal is one of the strongest elements in the call for justice. Such recognition does not necessarily involve equality of real power but is, foremost, a question of paying proper respect. This desire is particularly strong in countries that have suffered the humiliation of being the victim of colonialism or imperialism. This kind of recognition as equals is the *conditio sine qua non* for a smooth power transition in global politics, as it provides the ascending powers what they desire most, and it grants declining powers a place at the table even while others are becoming relatively more powerful. In the end, being recognized as equals would serve all members in a 21st Century Concert well and supply the basis for cooperation in good faith.

For the great powers, accepting equality would not entail such a great sacrifice. For, in human affairs, the informal is not necessarily less important than the formal. Governmental leaders of less powerful countries know the differences in real world importance quite well. Informally, therefore, unspoken inequalities will exist which are voluntarily admitted – in silence – by those at the lower end of the power hierarchy in a 21st Century Concert; this was no different in the Concert of Europe. This concession by the less powerful serves as compensation for the concession the more powerful make in admitting formal and ceremonial equality. It is exactly on the basis of this kind of tacit understanding that institutions like a 21st Century Concert could flourish.

6.4 Accepting diversity

Acknowledging equality necessitates a high level of tolerance in the diversity among states in relation to their systems of rule. This is, after all, an ethical issue, since systems of rule usually reflect the values cherished in a given polity. It is the responsibility of the people inhabiting a state to change their system of rule, should they decide to do so. The 21st Century Concert might be called upon in order to help with such a transition, as the historical concert occasionally did when abstention could mean destabilizing ripple effects in the region.

For the Concert, tolerance requires accepting the partners as they are, that is: refraining from ostracism of states on account of their domestic system of rule, a pattern that has become habitual for Western powers. Contrary to this attitude, clearing the way for a well-oiled 21st Century Concert entails recognizing that there is not any single form of responsible government. Acknowledging that different kinds of polities can practice different forms of responsible governance is tantamount to respecting diversity and paving the way for close cooperation among states with different systems of rule. This does not, however, exclude measured criticism and suggestions for incremental change in face-to-face encounters as well as routine diplomacy. It does, on the other hand, prohibit offensive propaganda-like public campaigns. Cultural differences that create differing degrees of sensitivity and indignation towards criticism should be kept in mind in the framing of critical statements. The distinction between admissible criticism and negative offense is hard to define in detail, and it must be left to the states to develop a practice which permits frank discussion without backing partners into a corner. This prescription for governments is not, of course, binding for civil society actors.

6.5 Avoiding antagonistic conflicts of interest

All of these considerations can only apply, however, provided that great powers are not already engaged in an enduring fundamental conflict, raising the specter of violent confrontation. States that are engaged in deadly antagonisms are unlikely to develop any sense of urgency for cooperation. Fortunately, present relations among the great powers, though far from conflict-free, are not ridden with mortal violence either. Conflicts exist concerning regional preponderance and influence, the strategic balance of forces, and the right domestic system of rule, along with some disagreements about how to handle particular conflicts and crises. But none of these amounts to the strife that was characteristic for most of the Westphalian order and, notably, the 20th century. Care must be taken to prevent existing dissonances from developing into intractable disputes that could sour relations between the four major players, the US, China, Russia, and India. In particular, divergences concerning territorial issues and vital regional security interests must be handled with great care, as their potential to get out of hand is particularly great. Nonetheless, the presumption exists that conflicts among the great powers are tractable and a 21st Century Concert is, indeed, possible. In addition, economic interdependence has created a pool of common interests that is helpful for balancing conflicting interests. The eve of World War I taught us that common economic interests may not be enough to bridge a growing divide between great powers when national governments pursue reckless and short-sighted policies. However, common interests create incentives for trying to overcome conflict. Public utterances by the leaders of great powers give the impression that there is an awareness of this need; the norm of “do no harm” begins with the will to avoid escalation among the great powers.

6.6 Pursuing stability and cooperative gains

The main concern of the Concert of Europe was the maintenance of stability in Europe. It was this concern – motivated by decades of war – that pulled otherwise diverging interests of the European powers together. Nowadays, interest in stability appears to be equally strong. It is not a static interest but rather a desire to keep the parameters of political and economic developments predictable. This desire is clearly visible in the great emphasis the Chinese government has put on stable framework conditions for the growth of China’s economy and the development of its polity for decades. Other governments pursue stability with the same level of seriousness. President George W. Bush’s unilateral withdrawal from agreed-upon rules and attempts to change the structure of a whole region – the Middle East – by use of force was a rare exception which has not been repeated elsewhere.

Stability, to repeat the point, is not the same as stagnation. Change is inevitable and necessary – after all, this study seeks a way to manage a process of momentous change in international relations, a major power shift, peacefully. The point of modern-day concert diplomacy should be the development of political understandings in order to manage the consequences of rapid and radical social change. There are two kinds of peaceful change: one being the peaceful change of shifting interstate power; and the other being the peaceful change of social development. Stability opens the door for change with the task of preventing upheavals and, above all, large scale violence that, under certain circumstances, may go hand in hand with major change.

Local and regional violence has existed in all periods of history and one should expect the future to be no different. There are both hopes and scholarship that suggest we have been witnessing a seminal decline of large-scale violence since the end of the Cold War. In committing to stability, great powers agree to do their best to contain violence where it breaks out – from the local to, at worst, the regional level – and to undertake joint efforts in order to work towards the termination of

armed conflicts. Even if they are not always successful – local war-makers at times persist against the will of the international community – containing such conflict is already of high value for the preservation of stability for the rest of the world.

The most important consequence of such a joint understanding is the renunciation of striving for geostrategic gains that might emerge from unilaterally taking sides in local or regional conflicts and supplying arms, money and advice to one of the conflicting parties. Geostrategic rivalry – which persisted throughout the Cold War and was a common feature during the period of colonialism and imperialism – would render a 21st Century Concert a futile pipedream. Some argue that colonial expansion was the fuel of national ambitions in the 19th century, making it possible to preserve peace in Europe. Whether this is true or not, empty spaces no longer exist on earth today, with the exception of the seabed and the Arctic/Antarctica. Thus, renewed geopolitical rivalry would feed fears that cooperation might be abused by the partner; the shadow of “relative gains” – the investment of disproportionate cooperation gains by other parties in future strategic advantages – looms over any form of cooperation. State powers must come to the conclusion that the gains of cooperation surpass whatever could be expected from unilateral geopolitical moves, offering a win-win outcome; these gains include stability, which is the key advantage that cooperation yields. This prudence might be fostered by the insight that geopolitical moves that are undertaken against the interests, and thus against the resistance, of peer states generally end up being costly and unsuccessful.

Last but not least, it should not be forgotten that a 21st Century Concert of powers would complement an already established, albeit incomplete, order that is host to various examples of international regimes designed for producing cooperative gains and stability. A Concert should therefore be sure to preserve and even further develop, but not to destabilize, international institutions, law and agreements (see Chapter 7). Maneuvering between stability and change is a precarious task. Too great of an insistence on stability could alienate many of the states dissatisfied with the status quo. Pushing too aggressively for change, on the other hand, could shatter the whole fabric of international relations and precipitate violence. Finding a middle road would therefore be one of the Concert’s pivotal missions.

6.7 Empathy and respect for the vital interests of other concert powers

Not trying to benefit at the expense of one’s partners requires a particular attitude towards them that may be described as not being “natural” in the history of great power relations: governments would have to develop *empathy* for the ways in which their own actions impact upon the perceptions of their partners. Developing such an in-depth understanding of how their peers “tick” requires them to be aware of the other’s vital interests. The dependency of a majority of great powers on imported energy sources, for example, creates natural concerns over accessibility and transport routes. Attempts to secure exclusive access or to control sea routes with superior military force creates plausible fears and distrust, being that this puts the vital needs of national economies at stake. Similarly, interference in domestic power struggles or the erection of military bases in states located in the immediate neighborhood of a great power can easily be interpreted as a direct threat to national security. Western powers as well as Russia, must learn to understand how the history of colonialism and imperialism – in which they were involved as conquering and ruling nations – has left lasting resentment in the minds of the people that were at the receiving end. The West, moreover, has to understand that triumphalism at the end of the Cold War and its aftermath left bitter feelings in place. This is the case even among well-disposed members of the Russian political elite; many Russians regard the achievements of a new paradigm such as electoral democracy

and free markets as a victory as well. Vital interests today also include the integrity of cyberspace: Recognition of vital interests thus includes renouncing hostile intruding another's cyberspace. This will require finding the proper balance between security needs and the freedom of the internet.

Respect for the vital interests of one's partners is not an isolated requirement but one among an ensemble of norms discussed in this chapter. It goes without saying that a great power that behaves unlawfully, threatens its smaller neighbors or uses military force arbitrarily will lose respect and trust, thereby provoking countermeasures by its peers. Being recognized as a power deserving of respect and having one's vital interests protected is contingent on behaving according to agreed rules. Concert powers must adhere to international law in the first place and the Concert's formal and informal norms and rules in the second place. Compliance, in turn, requires continuing efforts for developing and maintaining a common understanding of the meaning of norms and rules. Being offered respect and empathy and abiding by rules turn out to be two sides of the same coin.

6.8 Willingness to waive territorial claims and settle conflicts peacefully

The time in history when the expansion of territory was the most important determinant of political power for great nations has long faded. The size of a state's territory is still relevant for natural resource acquisition and strategic depth, but, today, economic power hinges largely on high-tech industry, sophisticated services, and advanced knowledge. In fact, large economic assets can be condensed on limited territory, such as in Japan or Germany. Nevertheless, the attachment to territory appears to be a feature to which human senses and emotions tend to be strongly attached. Territorial claims and related conflicts are still among the most pressing and dangerous disputes between communities in the 21st century, whether these disputes are more a matter of habit and psychology or of the real territorial worth of the territory in question.

Even today, territorial conflicts among great powers are high-risk situations; they must be defused as quickly and as sustainably as possible. The reason why states cannot accept present *de facto* boundaries as final borders is often incomprehensible to a detached outsider. In order to eliminate dangerous frictions between great powers, they should recognize the duty to work for solutions on whatever territorial disputes they are involved in in good faith, and also avoid measures that have the character of irreversibility. They might also consider transferring such disputes to international arbitration – when appropriate and promising – or to a mutually accepted mediator. By doing so, the most dangerous aspect of great power relations could be dealt with effectively and peacefully.

6.9 Readiness to pursue a good neighborhood policy

Territorial conflicts between great powers and smaller powers that are not represented in a 21st Century Concert could lead to a fatal dilemma. On the one hand, they could spark great power conflict due to the fact that pressure on smaller states by one concert member would likely provoke the protective "instincts" of others. On the other hand, if counterweight measures do not emerge and afford protection to the aggrieved small power, the legitimacy of a 21st Century Concert would suffer a (potentially fatal) defeat. In such a case, the belief by non-members that the Concert was only created to serve the narrow imperial interests of its members would receive a decisive boost. Consequently, attempts by a 21st Century Concert to maintain and enhance order and stability would probably be met with resistance by an increasing number of non-members. Members of a 21st Cen-

21st Century Concert should thus either agree on renouncing all territorial claims – on land and at sea – towards non-members or, at a minimum, declare their determination not to resolve disputes by force. When appropriate, states could also consider submitting disputes in which their claims would change the status quo to a suitable and agreeable form of international arbitration. It might also be useful to subject disputed territories to common resource management, turning the dispute into a case of win-win cooperation. After all, having a neighborhood that lives at ease with a neighboring great power is more conducive to the interests of this power than fearful small neighbors constantly searching for allies and guarantors, willingly offering their own territory as bases for such allies. In order to establish appropriate formats for good neighborhood policies, existing examples of regional and inter-regional, Western and non-Western structures should be examined for identifying best practices.

In summary, a good neighborhood policy is key; not only for enhancing the legitimacy of a 21st Century Concert in the rest of the world but also for avoiding clashes among concert members. Otherwise, pressure placed upon smaller neighbors can initiate the momentous forces of regional balancing and alliance-building, projection of protecting forces into allied territory, and the dependence of great power relations on the policies of smaller allies. All of this can be avoided if powers treat their neighbors, even the difficult ones, with an advisable degree of respect.

6.10 Abstention from the unilateral use of military force

The non-use of force except in cases of self-defense or based on the common deliberations of a 21st Century Concert and a mandate by the UNSC would emulate an important norm from the Concert of Europe. This is the logical complement of abstaining from geopolitical competition and territorial claims as well as of peaceful relations with one's neighbors. Unilaterally using military force for political aims is the most disturbing signal that a great power can send to the world. Additionally, the arbitrariness of such an act generally sends shock waves through the international community, almost implying a threat *erga omnes*. Returning to the status quo and routine work within a 21st Century Concert after one of its members has launched an attack would hardly be conceivable. If members of the Concert see a necessity in using force, approval must be collective and law-based. The common belief that members are faithful to concert norms hinges, first and foremost, on the renunciation of military unilateralism. This might sound like a considerable concession by great powers to make to the common good of stability, peace and cooperation, but the gains earned from reciprocity are considerable as well. The safe expectation that other great powers will not use their military forces unilaterally will enhance common security and, in turn, the security of every member within a 21st Century Concert and the international community at large. After all, such practices only reflect international law since the Charter of the UN was adopted. Unlike in the past, great powers today might be more prepared to pursue such law-abiding practices. This is the case, first, because these practices would correspond to their rational long-term interest in international stability; second, because cooperation in a 21st Century Concert might have a bonding effect on the participating governments, providing them with inclination towards greater self-restraint than in the past; and third, because military force is increasingly becoming a less and less efficient tool for settling disputes and realizing political objectives.

6.11 Renouncing ambitions of military superiority

The Concert of Europe knew no rules for constraining armaments. Today's world has rich experience in arms control and disarmament, having witnessed both success and failure in this field. Arms

control remained a European and Euro-Atlantic invention to a significant degree: until now, there are few arms control treaties and verification mechanisms in place in Asia and Africa, the most remarkable exceptions being five nuclear-weapon-free zones. It would be very difficult to design a balance of forces among all members of a 21st Century Concert. Fortunately, there is no need for such a fine-tuned blueprint. There are two crucial criteria that should be followed in this regard. First, in a 21st Century Concert, there should not be any allied groupings working in mutual opposition. Instead, the Concert should be characterized by shifting alignments depending on the issue but without isolating a single member from the rest, unless this member has fundamentally breached the rules. Second, none of the members should suffer from existential security concerns caused by the military posture of another member. This means that disarming and/or decapitating first strikes against the armed forces of any partner should be impossible for all members of a 21st Century Concert. Armed forces and, first of all, nuclear forces possessing first strike capabilities would have to be reconfigured in order to achieve this state of strategic stability for all. In that way, while power asymmetries continue to exist and a precise balance of forces cannot be established, a balance of power that stabilizes rather than undermines cooperation in a 21st Century Concert will be obtained.

For those who believe in the utility of absolute superiority, this is a difficult point to accept. However, history has taught us that there are only two strategies that states can employ in order to enhance their security in a multipolar setting: a negotiated balance that leaves everybody sufficiently confident that its security is guaranteed, or an arms race with potentially destabilizing consequences and very high costs in terms of resources and mutual distrust. In the latter case, national and common security would suffer, contrary to actors' intentions and despite their efforts. The presently superior military power will not be capable of maintaining that superiority forever in the face of unequal growth rates and budgetary deficits. Rising powers with high growth rates, on the other hand, will not be able to establish superiority because it is highly unlikely that they will ever come close to commanding 50% of the economic power among members of a 21st Century Concert. This is the case since technology and economic practices are spreading much faster than in the past, which means that variations in per capita GNP will diminish. Demographic projections do not foresee any state in the world ever comprising close to 50% of the world's population. Unfettered investment in the military will thus lead to the formation of a superior countervailing alliance, but not to military superiority or hegemony. Arms races are bound to end in stalemates to the detriment of all. It is thus reasonable to establish rules of the game which dissuade members from wasting precious resources.

6.12 Abiding by international law

International law is the surest guidance for state behavior in today's world. Great powers demonstrating that they are bound by law in practice project an air of stability and certainty that transcends the notion of anarchy still connected to the realm of international relations. However, international law is open to interpretation and is a matter of negotiation. Thus, a concert of powers should strive for a consensus about how legal norms should be defined in substance. The fact that international law can be changed, preferably by multilateral negotiations, makes it adaptable to shifting circumstances. Accepting international law as a binding institution mitigates the *de facto* inequality that prevails in international relations and lessens the difference between members of a 21st Century Concert and those outside of the Concert than when those inside act capriciously. A 21st Century Concert and its members should understand and conduct themselves as stewards of international law, assisting the UNSC. This serves their own self-interest and is a service to the international community at the same time.

6.13 Granting respect, a voice, and responsibility to non-members

As outlined in Chapter 5, a well-functioning 21st Century concert depends on its beneficial impact on the world and on the support emerging from legitimacy it should enjoy. The interaction of concert members with “the rest” must be shaped in such a way so as to increase legitimacy both in terms of the impacts that actions taken by a 21st Century concert have on the outsiders, and in terms of the attitudes and practices of the Concert. Hence, ensuring respect, a voice and responsibility to non-members would be indispensable norms of a 21st Century Concert.

This also means that a number of the norms guiding behavior within the Concert – that we have elaborated above – must equally apply to the Concert’s interaction with the outside world. Two norms deserve special mention: Empathy and respect for vital interests and accepting diversity. If mutual respect of its members is the lifeblood of the Concert, the same is true for the legitimacy which a 21st Century Concert would acquire in its political environment. Legitimacy will flow from the respect exhibited by members of the concert for the identities, positions and interests of the vast majority of the international community. In practice, concert members would thus be well advised to make full use of the measures proposed in Chapter 5. Granting respect includes giving a voice to non-members on the major issues of world politics and concerning the regions in which these countries are located. Moreover, granting respect to other powers also comprises of sharing responsibility with them, which is even more important as middle powers and occasionally even small states have shown their determination to actively engage in world politics. Thus, a 21st Century Concert would include powers demonstrating a high commitment to responsibility for the fate of world politics. The duty to accept stewardship does not, however, justify the construction of a directorate.

Furthermore, concert members should also practice recognition of political diversity. States who are in good standing must respect the sovereignty and political preferences of other states who are in good standing. They must refrain from actions that compromise the security and well-being of other states or their citizens and refrain from defaming other states and governments. Domestically, responsible governance – not necessarily democratic in constitution – would be the standard for gaining recognition and respect for one’s sovereignty and vital interests. The relevant boundaries of “responsible governance” which apply in this regard are drawn by established international consensus. Military aggression or brutish domestic behavior as defined in the 2005 UN General Assembly resolution paragraph on the “Responsibility to Protect” – namely genocide, large scale “ethnic cleansing”, crimes against humanity, and war crimes – represent the trigger for consideration of military interference by the international community and the Concert in particular, as a measure of last resort. Each such interference must rely on careful discussion and due procedure. It would only – informally – be carried out by deliberation of the members of a 21st Century Concert and – formally – by the UNSC that a government would be found in violation of the standard of respectability. Generally, a 21st Century Concert should support coercive strategies only very selectively, that is, *in extremis*. Consensual, non-coercive strategies are, in most cases and under most circumstance, a more attractive and effective option. At the same time, a system of sanctions, including collective and properly mandated coercive actions in extreme situations, would be necessary for the 21st Century Concert to deal with violations and outbreaks of aggressive unilateralism. This would even apply to serious breaches of the rules by a member of the Concert; membership privileges would, of course, also be suspended in such a case.

Chapter 7 – How would a 21st Century Concert relate to existing institutions?

The Concert of Europe institutionalized great power cooperation in what could almost be described as an institutional vacuum and a legal environment that was rather unevolved. We find ourselves far from that void today: The international system is populated by a panoply of different and interlocking institutions and rests on a dense system of international law. A 21st Century Concert would have to find its place within this network, and members would have to be very careful to integrate their new practice into the existing legal framework in order to avoid jeopardizing, undermining or destroying the fabric of norms and rules that keep the political world together.

7.1 The relationship between a 21st Century Concert and the UN-System

International law and diplomatic practice makes the UN the center of decision-making in the area of international peace and security. It gives the UNSC the prerogative to authorize and mandate certain actions or prohibitions; the UNSC can act as law-maker and as executive body, and sometimes as a control and sanctioning body as well. A 21st Century Concert must be compatible with this construction, which is enshrined in the UN Charter and serves as a core component of current international law.

7.1.1 A 21st Century Concert and the UN Charter/international law

A 21st Century Concert, as conceived in this paper, would fully be in compliance with international law. The Concert would not lay claims competing with the prerogatives of the UNSC. Since abiding by international law is part and parcel of the principles that are meant to guide the actions of concert members, a 21st Century Concert can claim its purpose to be the maintenance and the strengthening of international law, filling existing gaps and clarifying ambiguities. Since international law, like all norms, is subject to differing, sometimes conflicting interpretations, Concert members would have to strive to develop as much of a common understanding of its meaning as possible.

Legal barriers as to consulting, ad hoc or regularly, on matters related to international peace and security do not exist. The EU does so regularly, as does the Non-Aligned Movement and certain regional groupings. This may also concern matters under consideration by the UNSC. In fact, the P-5 consult regularly in private, outside of the regular sessions, in order to reach agreement. Provided that a 21st Century Concert demonstrates self-restraint concerning the scope and reach of its activities, its establishment and international law should not be incompatible.

7.1.2 A 21st Century Concert and the United Nations Security Council

The same conclusion applies to the interaction between a 21st Century Concert and the UNSC in particular. The establishment of a concert with its more informal and flexible ways of operating would be a highly useful supplement to the UNSC. Its founding is presently of particular urgency being that prospects for reform of the UNSC are very dim.

Complementing the formal and legal, but also regionally imbalanced, UNSC with an informal 21st Century Concert without legal underpinning but better balance would have its advantages. Great

powers not permanently participating in the UNSC would have the opportunity to present their voice in important deliberations. This would make it more difficult for permanent UNSC members to support positions within formal UNSC decision-making that other members of a 21st Century Concert have defined as running counter to their vital interests. On the contrary, in-depth consultations by the Concert that have resulted in an overwhelming majority of concert members supporting a certain course of action may make permanent UNSC members hesitant to cast their veto unless their most vital interests would be at stake on account of their isolated position. Yet, they would also not be formally deprived of their veto power. Hence, the Concert would serve as an “impulse giver” to the UNSC, as a body that frames the decision environment without ultimately determining it (see Chapter 8). The informality of the 21st Century Concert would, in principle, enable it to act where the UNSC fails: in the rare cases that a permanent UNSC member state would utilize its Veto in against the express will of the rest of the Concert. This possibility of a veto override must be kept in mind; however, it goes without saying that the Concert could achieve this only after a considerable period of working together and building the necessary trust inside and with the rest of the world. And even then, it must proceed with utmost care and prudence, lest the member that cast its veto at the UNSC be alienated from its peers.

7.1.3 A 21st Century Concert and the United Nations General Assembly

A 21st Century Concert’s relationship to the UNGA is of particular importance. The UNGA is the forum in which all parties excluded from the Concert reside. Showing respect and deference towards the UNGA would thus not only be appropriate, but also symbolically and psychologically the right thing to do. One way of doing so would be to submit regular reports to the UNGA on the Concert’s proceedings, and hold informal meetings to give UNGA members an opportunity to voice their positions towards these reports. The Concert could also explicitly encourage the UNGA to continue and expand on its practice to construe Art. 12 of the Charter as to allow parallel deliberations of peace and security issues by the UNGA and UNSC. By consenting to the continuing practice of the UNGA and even regularly asking the UNGA for its input, the great powers would visibly demonstrate their recognition of the important role of middle and small powers in dealing with delicate issues of peace and security. But it should also be remembered that nations and societies are represented at the UNGA through the narrow “bottleneck” of diplomatic representations of respective foreign ministries. The Concert of powers should not limit itself to informing nations and societies solely via this relatively narrow channel, but should employ a wider arsenal of printed and electronic mass-media, satellite TV broadcasting and internet.

7.2 The relationship between a 21st Century Concert and the G20

A 21st Century Concert would largely be concerned with security issues in the narrower sense, interstate disputes, violent conflicts and transnational challenges which have the potential of stimulating and perpetuating armed violence. A 21st Century Concert would fill a void in the security field that is a result of incongruence of the UNSC with the current and future distribution of power. Concert diplomacy might become over-politicized or overburdened by taking on too many global issues at the same time, such as finance, currency, trade, or the environment. It would be well advised to concentrate on security, including crises response and conflict resolution in the narrower sense, leaving the economy to the G20, while retaining relationships with all the relevant international organizations in that field. The G20 has by now become a well-established body whose mem-

bership is composed with consideration of impact on the world economy (which, incidentally, is largely identical with the impact on the world environment) and is thus in a good position to act as the equivalent of a concert in the economic and environmental realm. The G20 and the concert can thus be said to functionally complement each other.

In the three options for membership discussed above, all concert members but one would also be members of the G20. Depending on which criteria are prioritized, either half or four fifths of the G20 would also participate in the 21st Century Concert. This close relationship in terms of membership should make coordination of activities easy for issues on which economics and security interact. Membership overlap should also facilitate forging cross-issue solutions, if linkage be needed to arrive at agreements in the security sector. The one exception to the proposed division of labor might be the energy sector, as energy is perceived by most governments as being intimately related to security issues, and as there is not an global body dealing authoritatively with energy issues. Avoiding a clash of great powers over their energy needs would be one of the main missions of a 21st Century Concert, and dealing with ways and means of developing a joint strategy for managing supply and demand, and having a strategy for dealing with supply interruptions of crude oil will be vital in keeping relations among the great powers amicable and peaceful. For this reason, having consultations with the – up to now – most competent international body in the energy sector, the OECD's International Energy Agency, might make sense for a 21st Century Concert.

7.3 The relationship between a 21st Century Concert and interstate regional organizations: Towards a "Concert of Concerts".

One of the trends in the current era is the growing importance, reach, and scope of action among regional organizations concerned with security issues, acting in a mode of collective defense and/or collective security. A 21st Century Concert should observe the principle of subsidiarity here: Issues that regional organizations take on and work through without requesting external help should be left to them. Subsidiarity relieves the global entities of an even heavier burden and is an effective means of defusing the risk of great power clashes on regional issues.

When the UN Charter was adopted in 1945, its Chapter 8 already defined quite wide credentials and responsibilities for regional interstate organizations as "security providers". Today, there is a family of regional arrangements and organizations; Africa, America, and Eurasia have developed organizations of continental size able to serve as regional fora for political compromise and decision-making in full accordance with the UN Charter.

The role of regional organizations in crisis response and conflict resolution manifested itself especially intensively and clearly in 1990s-2010s. These included traditional peace keeping, robust peace keeping, and occasionally forceful and coercive operations by regional organizations, which raised critical questions of legality and legitimacy. In such cases, mutual non-recognition of regional conflict resolution practices took place. The only option for overcoming this divisive consequence is to force regional organizations towards much wider and better coordination of their conflict resolution functions and responsibilities among themselves, for example through a coordination council of regional organizations.

Given the rise in the importance of regional organizations, a 21st Century Concert should conduct consultations among concert leaders and representatives of major regional organizations on a regular basis – one could label it a "Concert of Concerts". Consultations could also proceed in the for-

mat of several regional “clusters” of regional organizations. These gatherings could discuss the particular security concerns of these organizations and the global developments that are regarded as particularly significant by regional leadership. Such an exchange could also be used to identify possible regional concerns about the activities of states or organizations, particularly the 21st Century Concert, and find ways to allay them.

One of the broadest, strongest and most developed regional organizations – the European Union – would likely be a member of the Concert. Mechanisms created in course of its incorporation into the Concert and in constant multilateral dialogue between EU-member states on elaboration of the EU stand within the Concert debates may and should be used as a platform for involving other regional organizations into interaction with the Concert. These would potentially include membership once the regional organization develops the necessary institutions and practices to be counted as an actor in its own right.

In order to optimize coordination, focused working groups for addressing those specific transnational challenges such as terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking, illegal arms trade, cybersecurity and piracy could be established. Most regional organizations and most great powers are involved in combating these risks and can share experiences in a way that helps gain a better understanding of the nature of “best practices”. Such an exchange might also foster agreement on common priorities and channel resources into activities and areas where they can be used most economically for objectives that are shared globally. Thus, a significant portion of a 21st Century Concert’s tasks can only be realized via a “Concert of Concerts” formula.

7.4 The relationship between a 21st Century Concert and civil society

The relationship between a 21st Century Concert and civil society is no doubt a complex one. Civil society – most notably NGOs as its most “institutionalized branch” – have become real world players in international politics, even in the realm of security policy (think of the International Crisis Group or the Landmine Coalition). NGOs can improve the quality of decisions and implementation with their expertise. They create a particular sort of transparency which increases the legitimacy of global governance, and they would likewise enhance the input legitimacy of a 21st Century Concert. As such, they cannot and must not be ignored. Yet, NGOs are not valued everywhere: in China, Russia, some of the major third world democracies and – depending on who is in government – even in some Western states, NGOs are monitored with a skepticism and suspicion. Moreover, NGOs only represent their own membership and some are as hierarchically led as some non-democratic states. A group of NGOs thus does not command any more intrinsic legitimacy than the group of states that would be proposed for membership in a 21st Century Concert – representing 60% of the world’s population, two thirds of which is represented by elected governments. Finally, the NGO community shows a clear dominance in the West, hosting more resourceful and, consequently, more influential NGOs. In establishing a relationship between a 21st Century Concert and NGOs, one should be sure to avoid re-introducing the Western hegemony through the backdoor of civil society, which the Concert is supposed to overcome.

ECOSOC, the UNSC and the G8 all have developed mechanisms for establishing dialogue with NGOs; these could be emulated and enhanced by a 21st Century Concert. First, the Concert presidency could consult with a group of major NGOs (carefully selected for regional balance and according to criteria agreed upon by Concert members) on their agenda priorities. Second, Concert members (through their “sherpas”) could consult their national and regional NGOs for the same

purpose. Third, there could be time allotted for open discussion between Concert leaders and selected NGO representatives invited to a high-level meeting. Fourth, the Concert could organize public symposia on relevant issues for, or along with, interested NGOs. Fifth, following the model of the WTO, the Concert could establish an informal NGO advisory board once co-operation with civil society has created a sufficient degree of mutual trust. Sixth, there could be continuous co-operation between NGO representatives and Concert expert groups on specific projects or programs.

One such project could be devoted to a subject that has, up to now, attracted enthusiastic support only from NGOs, the UN, and some small and middle powers, namely, *human security*. This is a concept that places the individual human, and the weakest part of society in particular, at the center of security policy. A 21st Century Concert could establish a long-term human security program (as the G8 has established a program to secure fissile and radioactive materials worldwide) with significant funding – to which members of a 21st Century Concert would contribute voluntarily in proportion to their capacity. Priorities and modalities for utilizing these resources would then be negotiated and set out in a working group of NGOs and Concert country experts. Such an undertaking would call for collaboration between a 21st Century Concert and civil society beyond the mere discussion forum format (however valuable) and demonstrate to the poorer parts of the world that a 21st Century Concert, far from being a “rich men’s club” focused only on enhancing its own power, cares for the weak and the poor of the world. Of course, human security remains a contested concept today. The surrounding debate, however, is not split along the traditional North-South or West-South lines. Thus, there may exist the possibility that Concert members could come to the agreement, after some negotiation, that a project on human security could be a useful joint action done with civil society.

7.5 “Fitting” is a matter of practice

In principle, irreconcilable problems should not arise from having the 21st Century Concert be a central, and additional, international forum. Its relationship to other institutions will depend on how concert states that participate in different institutions and organizations reconcile their various roles in these forums. If P5 members were to consistently ignore the positions taken by the Concert or the vast majority of its members, the Concert would, in the end, not become a viable tool for improving great power relations. If concert members pursue collective policies without due regard to the deliberations of other institutions, the exclusion problem will loom large, and the concert’s legitimacy and effectiveness will suffer. Either dysfunction can be avoided granted that members truly commit to the objectives of the Concert, are cautious of its legitimacy and skillfully manage the issue of exclusion.

Chapter 8 – How would a 21st Century Concert work?

Establishing a 21st Century Concert as a new institution is a daunting task. Some noteworthy risks include the inflation of expectations among those who would welcome an attempt to establish continuous cooperation among the great powers as well as the inflation of unnecessary aversion among those who would not. The following considerations on the inner workings of a 21st Century Concert address both points. Even though ambitions are high, members should approach their mission with a spirit of modesty and caution.

8.1 Start modestly, evolve slowly

How could a 21st Century Concert come into existence? While many roads could lead to this ultimate goal, one promising scenario might look as follows. One or more interested members would commence quiet consultations, first approaching the most powerful partners. If these consultations reveal sufficient interest and convergence, the circle of consulted partners could be widened. Then, the first meeting would be called. A credible actor of good international reputation would be especially suitable for taking the initiative for this opening gathering, preferably a member from the “emerging world”; Indonesia, Brazil or South Africa might be appropriate initiators. The head of state or government would send personal letters of invitation to the leaders of other nations (or, in the case of the EU, confederation) that should be present, and table an agenda. Membership would be cleared with the “top four” (the US, China, India, and Russia) during consultations preceding the invitation, and these four might support the invitation by discrete demarches. Membership by invitation would likely be the only way of getting the EU into the Concert, rather than its member states. The agenda should be discussed with all invitees in advance before invitations are sent out. The inviting state would also host the first meeting of the Concert. A suitable model could be the start of the G7 in the mid-seventies, a gathering of the seven leading Western industrialized countries. The number of participants should be limited to leaders, perhaps their “sherpas” and foreign ministers, and interpreters in order to permit a frank and relaxed exchange. The agenda for the first meeting could include a joint deliberation on the Concert’s overall goals, as outlined in the letter of invitation. Also included would be the identification of priorities as seen by the leaders and the ways in which to handle invitations to guests and advance consultations with non-members in the run-up to the next meeting. Based on these priorities, the agenda for the second gathering could be agreed upon at the end of the meeting. Furthermore, attendees should be decided on who will hold the position of the Concert’s first annual chair (probably the first host). Enough time should be allotted for informal bilateral talks, socializing, and a general discussion on the “state of the world”, including any specific conflicts or crises the leaders would wish to address. Finally, a communiqué should be issued at the end of the meeting containing very general information on the formation of the concert as well as its goals. This outline would be a promising start. From the second meeting on, a 21st Century Concert would take up specific issues that are on the international agenda, prepared by consultations among members with non-members, as specified in the previous chapter. The number of participants could grow modestly, but should probably not exceed five per country at any time. Leaders should have some time among themselves – without staff – as a necessary part of the proceedings.

A 21st Century Concert should be flexible and adaptable to the changing flows of international politics. The annual high-level meetings would be the most important and at the same time most visible proof of the Concert’s existence. There could also be regular consultative meetings by concert member representatives with other international organizations such as the UN, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, or the Conference on Disarmament, to list a few. Such meetings would address the current agendas of these bo-

dies, which often include crisis issues on which members of a 21st Century Concert might like to coordinate. A 21st Century Concert could also convene expert meetings to deal with specific issues of high saliency. Obvious examples are the struggle against terrorism and organized crime. Such groups, working regularly over a period of time would be valuable to all members in improving national practices and could yield a considerable profit for a 21st Century Concert as a collective and for the world community as a whole. Lastly, there could be additional meetings addressing immediate and acute crises in certain states and regions. The ambassadors in the respective capital could be instructed to establish an ad hoc group or a permanent conference to address the issue and to develop consensus within the Concert on how to proceed in tandem, notably when other bodies are slow to take decision or impede action on an issue.

8.2 The advantages of informality

If the purpose of a 21st Century Concert would, first of all, be confidence-building among the great powers and, secondly, seeking consensus on major issues outside of the straitjacket of diplomatic protocol; informality should certainly be the preferable mode of operation. Informal talks among leaders, but also among representatives under instruction, could help explore the possibilities outside of the routines of high diplomacy. They could also test new ways of proceeding without undue commitment that might be appropriated by the partners or overplayed in domestic debates. It might be much more promising to deal with the world's crises when there is an absence of momentous consequences for positions taken – as in the UNSC when it decides, under Chapter VII, on sanctions and even military force. At least in the early years of a 21st Century Concert – there is no urgent need here to project further into the future –, informal proceedings would appear to be the advisable mode of operation.

Informality would also serve the needs of the Concert in a more specific way: One of most relevant and, at the same time, most sensitive issues is the handling of bilateral conflicts and disputes. Since a 21st Century Concert, as proposed here, is meant to facilitate the development of peaceful and cooperative relations, members cannot evade addressing the issues that present the highest risk to this objective, namely quarrels with one of the other members of a 21st Century Concert. On the other hand, it would be understandable if some members shy away from discussing these problems multilaterally, so as not to end up becoming isolated on an issue concerning their vital interests. How could one square this circle? A 21st Century Concert might profit from an informal *modus operandi*. There should be an explicit agreement that every member has the duty to attempt to resolve bilateral disputes. These talks would not be conducted in public, but bilaterally *in camera*. Drafting brief reports towards the end of the meeting on the progress made in these bilateral meetings could be worthwhile in this case. This procedure would create a degree of friendly “peer pressure” on all members to carry forward dispute settlements without the risk of alienating a member from the rest through partisan treatment on important bilateral questions. In this way, the core purpose of improving great power relations would be served best.

This assessment of the virtues of informality would also apply to a 21st Century Concert's relation to the rest of the world. Informality, combined with the degree of transparency that a well-designed consultation system with non-members affords (see Chapter 5), can seem less menacing and more tolerable than a body that is more formally institutionalized. Thus, informality helps with the legitimacy problem that a 21st Century Concert would inevitably face. In order to keep meetings informal and bureaucracies limited and lean, a 21st Century Concert should make use of existing national administrative structures (president or prime minister offices, foreign ministries, embassies)

rather than create a special secretariat. As in other comparable groupings, the position of host/chair would rotate annually. The host would bear responsibility for organizing meetings of a 21st Century Concert during its year of tenure and for maintaining communication during that period. In order to keep the focus on cooperation and facilitate quick communication, appointing a point of contact (a “sherpa” with personal responsibility) in the national government, as close to the leadership as possible, might suffice. Each point of contact should have direct access to the national leader and should be linked with all other points of contact by a “hotline”. Mechanisms relating to “Troika” – a contact group between the most recent host of the Concert summit, the current year host and upcoming hosting countries/governments – could be established to provide continuity.

8.3 Transparency vs. confidentiality

Another issue is the degree to which proceedings of a 21st Century Concert should be transparent versus being kept confidential. As is often the case, a middle road would appear to be most advisable. In order to quell fears about ambitions of a “global directorate” and gain the trust of the community of states and of civil society, the world should be made aware of the Concert’s goals, its vision of the world – as far as a consensus on that issue emerges – and its positions and objectives on specific issues, conflicts and crises. It would likewise be essential, as discussed in Chapter 5, to involve non-member actors in discussions on issues in which they have a particular stake – another important aspect of transparency. At the same time, the discussions and positions taken by individual leaders and representatives during the internal discussions must remain confidential. A 21st Century Concert would, after all, be a confidence-building exercise; confidence and confidentiality are closely connected. Leaders must be able to think aloud without immediately being taken to task by the press. The whole idea of informality in a 21st Century Concert is meant to facilitate the building of consensus over time. Total transparency – as opposed to measured transparency that meets real needs – is the enemy of informality and of trust and could therefore complicate great power relations.

8.4 Methods of taking positions

A 21st Century Concert would, first and foremost, have to be a *consultative* body, helping to clarify positions, stakes and priorities – and thereby to avoid misunderstandings – and trying to narrow and remove differences among its members. It would not have strong ambitions to be a collective actor, at least not in its initial phases. Its main added value would be a free exchange of views and concerns on issues deemed relevant by participants, with the intention, but not the indispensable need, to arrive at a consensus on all issues discussed and, if successful, to promote this position outside a 21st Century Concert. Towards the end of a concert meeting, the chairing host would attempt a summary to which all participants would consent or register their dissent. There might be another attempt to overcome dissent, if at all feasible; however, this would be desirable but not crucial. In later years, attempts to achieve consensus would and should grow. This might then include courses of action such as: working together on a certain policy in the UNSC, conducting parallel or joint proceedings, creating a contact group to talk with a specific state, and the like. This more operative path would be followed with care and caution and without infringing on the sphere of existing legal institutions. It would be preferential to remain reserved rather than to fail due to overreaching ambitions.

The aim of working towards smooth great power relations would therefore, for the foreseeable future, rely on avoiding entering activities or uttering public statements without the consensus of Concert's members. This procedural preference would be commendable being that a 21st Century Concert, as stated, would, in essence, not be a decision-making, but a consultative, decision "preparing" body. The goal would be to bring the great powers together as closely as possible on vital issues of global politics. When common positions are taken towards the rest of the world, or specific actions promoted for particular situations (e.g. joint proceedings), this should not be done against an explicit stance taken by one of the members, even if this entails non-action by the Concert in these cases.

As the group would operate on an informal basis, procedures would never be set in stone. In principle, there would be an array of approaches for reaching positions. Consensus minus one, for example, is used (even formally) in an organization like the OSCE; elsewhere, qualified majorities are sufficient for arriving at a collective decision. The Concert will have to develop its own practice in this regard. It is clear, however, that with informal procedures, individual countries dissatisfied with a position taken by the Concert would also be free to commit to deviant behavior. The concert should thus endeavor to maintain unity whenever possible when it engages in important policies. One option that might help with this difficulty would be the practice of opting out without objection (comparable to abstention or not voting in the UNSC). Occasionally, members might have doubts concerning a particular position or activity proposed, but these objections might be not grave enough to prevent the others from proceeding as they wish. Members may then decide to voice their doubts, worries, and concerns but not ask the rest to stop their preferred course of action. There might also be situations in which members principally share the view of the majority but nevertheless do not wish to participate in their activities; they can then "opt out" while the others proceed as agreed.

8.5 Preparing decisions, not deciding for others

A 21st Century Concert should define its own status as an *informal* structure, related to and supplementing the work of formal institutions such as the UN. Consequently, it should constrain the scope of its activities to intense consultations that serve to prepare efficient decision-making in the formal, legal bodies. Its main mission would be to avoid hot great power conflict and to create the conditions for broader cooperation – first in security and then in other issues – by eliminating barriers to cooperation that result from the security dilemma in general and specific conflict constellations in particular. This set of objectives might lead members of a 21st Century Concert to address issues beyond their own mutual relationship once sufficient confidence has been created through the experience of constructive cooperation. In doing so, it should focus on preparing decisions which, however, are ultimately and formally taken elsewhere, namely among the institutions with a legal right to decide, such as the UNSC, UNGA, ECOSOC, and the like. This modesty will not diminish the impact of such co-ordination; it will make it clear that a 21st Century Concert is not meant to undo but rather to supplement established legal procedures and that it recognizes the participation rights of all member states therein, as elaborated upon in Chapter 7.

8.6 Understanding cooperation as a process of mutual socialization

A 21st Century Concert would open a new chapter in multilateral security cooperation. The group has to find an approach for working on its own, internally as well as externally, by trial and error. In this process, dealing with the world's problems will inculcate a culture of "concertation", based on consultation, mutual respect, and the acceptance of global responsibilities. The more confidence that is built up in the course of this process, the more effectively the concert will be able to handle issues at hand. It is thus important to allow the group time to develop its modes of operation and not overburden it with expectations that are too high at the beginning.

Conclusion

A 21st Century Concert, as envisaged in this paper, would be a unique entity, tailor-made for the perils of today's world. It would neither emulate its historical predecessor, the Concert of Europe, nor simply duplicate modern informal great power arrangements, most notably G8 and G20; though there is much to be learned from all of them. From the Concert of Europe, it would borrow the central idea that great powers ought to be *peace-managers*, bearing responsibility for peace, stability and security of the whole system as opposed to their own territory, direct neighborhood. It would likewise borrow on the idea that peace management is not the same as preserving the status quo at all cost, but rather involves managing change smoothly when upholding peace so requires. A 21st Century Concert can also adopt several norms and values of relevance today, while discarding others that are no longer suitable. From the G20, it would adopt many aspects of the proceedings and, of course, a major part of its membership roster. From both the European Concert *and* the G20, it can distill the advantages of informality vis-à-vis the formality enshrined, for example, in the UNSC.

A 21st Century Concert, as detailed here, would not require any headquarters, nor even a noteworthy bureaucracy or standing joint military forces. To fulfill its main tasks – defusing the threat of great power conflict, managing the move away from a unipolar international order, and preparing for a peaceful power transition – a 21st Century Concert would have to primarily function as a sphere of intense and effective confidence building. It could enable the great powers to avoid risks and dangers inherent in their interrelations and to handle external threats and crises collectively. It would achieve this by increasing the transparency of its members' strategies, basic interests, needs and threat perceptions. It would do so by defusing existing disputes and by establishing a mode of cooperation in which concert members respect the vital interests of others. At least at the outset, a 21st Century Concert would thus be an informal institution, offering its members additional channels for consultation and communication in order to collectively develop and refine the principles and norms of great power cooperation. Being based on consultation, negotiation, learning and a process of developing joint practices, a 21st Century Concert would not begin as an entity already matured to perfection. Deeper shared understandings of appropriate rules and codes of conduct and differentiation of the institutional setting will likely emerge from common practices over time.

The core interest of a 21st Century Concert would, broadly defined, be security governance, just as the topic of the G20 is broadly defined as economic governance. Questions of war and peace, be it among great powers, great powers and smaller states, or even within smaller states, remain key questions which, if unaddressed, could be detrimental to the interests and the well-being of all members of the international system – especially under conditions of rapid power shifts and in the presence of several nuclear-armed actors. Great power cooperation in the form of a 21st Century Concert, embedded in a broader system of multilateralism including the whole international community, could prove useful to assist in addressing non-security issues of common concern. It would primarily do so by minimizing the risk of well-known political stalemates that feature in the UNSC. Such stalemates too often arise, not from fundamental disagreement over basic principles and objectives, but rather as a product of disagreements about the correct approach to follow. They also tend to arise due to a lack of knowledge about the other powers' evaluation of the situation and their preferred problem-solving strategies. They arise from the notion among the great powers that they are entangled in an intense rivalry that the Concert, in fact, would be designed to mitigate. It with this last point that an informal institution based on communicative and concerted practices could make an important contribution.

The ability of a 21st Century Concert to achieve its goals, overcome obstacles and avoid the shortcomings of the Concert of Europe depends largely on its criteria for membership, its norms, the treatment of non-members, and embedding the Concert into the preexisting international institu-

tional order. This agenda would require a delicate tradeoff between efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy: If even one of these dimensions is not dealt with carefully, a 21st Century Concert would risk dysfunction, failure to reach its goals, lose legitimacy and provoke international resistance – thereby drastically decreasing its chances of success or, even, establishment. Compared to its 19th century counterpart, a 21st Century Concert would therefore have to be much more careful, considerate and modest when it comes to embedding itself into the international landscape, especially when establishing and maintaining its legitimacy. We have suggested several options for membership with up to seventeen states as possible members. These would qualify on the basis of their capabilities, influence, achievements and recognition as well as for reasons of regional and cultural balance. A 21st Century Concert, as proposed here, would thus not only out-perform the Concert of Europe but likewise the majority of current institutions and alternative visions of world order in terms of representativeness, thus boosting its legitimacy. A 21st Century Concert must be designed to “fit in” and to cooperate with the existing international legal and normative order – rather than replacing or competing with and thereby destabilizing it. Embedding the Concert within a renewed system of multilateralism would increase its legitimacy and lower resistance significantly. Supporting, cooperating with, and complementing existing entities will also raise the effectiveness of a 21st Century Concert without endangering its efficiency, thereby making it a promising tool for addressing the dangers and problems lying ahead.

The relations between concert members (as listed in this paper) will certainly not be without problems; however, they in no case have to escalate to the level of irreparable antagonism. Prospective members would share security concerns such as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, piracy, illegal arms trafficking and stabilizing energy resource markets from political upheaval. A 21st Century Concert, as proposed here, would combine efforts for conflict prevention and security cooperation and, thus, unite actors with common as well as diverse interests behind these goals. This should serve as a common basis in order to get the process off the ground. The demands on the members of a 21st Century Concert would not be outrageous and in no way obviate their long-term interest. Likewise, the international order would not be turned upside down, undermined, or replaced by an oligarchic *diktat*. The chances of creating a concert of powers would therefore be quite positive.

The legacy of the Concert of Europe, whose downfall coincided with and arguably even facilitated the outbreak of World War I, reminds us of the need to construct a 21st Century Concert on more solid foundations. If the increasingly urgent need to establish great power cooperation in the form of a 21st Century Concert remains unrealized, the outcome might truly prove fatal. The greatest danger for a peaceful international order is having the great powers deal with their conflicts and the impending redistribution of power in an unchecked manner. Even a partial realization of the set of norms and the network of procedures which have been elaborated on in this study would be helpful in mitigating the security challenges ahead and thereby reduce the likelihood of dramatic *common bads* and maybe even provide a basis for the production of *common goods*.

List of Abbreviations

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Term
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council (UN)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
G7	Group of Seven
G8	Group of Eight
G20	Group of Twenty
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
OAS	Organization of American States
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
P-5	Permanent Five (Members of the UNSC)
R2P	Responsibility to Protect (UN Report)
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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