Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Security Community: A New Role for the OSCE


Abstract

Peaceful Change was essentially based on ideological and military confrontation and maintaining the status quo, conditions were slowly changing. The document was signed by the leaders of 33 European states as well as the United States and Canada. Subsequent landmarks in this process initiated in Helsinki, and the institutions agreed upon in the CSCE Final Act also contributed in a significant way to the peaceful transformation of the system.

The Static Balance of Power Historically, fundamental change in the system of international security resulted, as a rule, from great wars: The victors imposed their rules on the losers. This happened after the Napoleonic Wars, when, at the 1815 Congress of Vienna, on the initiative of Austria’s Chancellor Klemens von Metternich and the British Foreign Secretary Lord Castlereagh, the foundation was laid for the “Concert of Europe” and the Holy Alliance, which together ensured Europe’s stability for several generations to come. The same thing happened at the Congress of Berlin (1878) after the end of the Balkan Wars and the unification of Germany, and after World War I, when the victorious powers dictated the conditions of a new political and legal order in the Treaty of Versailles (1919). Finally, this is what occurred after the defeat of the Third Reich, when the anti-Hitler coalition set the rules and standards for a new legal and political order in Europe. The system that developed as a result of the decisions of the great powers in Yalta and Potsdam rested not only on the principles and standards adopted in the 1945 UN Charter, but also on the territorial and political changes that had taken place in that same year. In this system, peace and stability were to be ensured through the preservation of the territorial and political status quo in Europe and respect for the principle of the balance of power between the United States and the Soviet Union. The system agreed upon at Yalta and Potsdam was static, based on mutual “deterrence”, where the relatively high level of stability was guaranteed by the high risk of nuclear war. A new political philosophy expressed in NATO’s “Harmel Report” (1967) spelled the beginning of the end of the system. The key idea of the report boiled down to initiating a policy of détente in relations with the Eastern bloc without compromising the security of the democratic world. The first conceptual framework for a new policy of détente that would not forsake deterrence was spelled out in Egon Bahr’s address in a Protestant church in 55 Tützing (1963). Bahr’s guiding idea was of “change through rapprochement” (“Wandel durch Annäherung”). He postulated gradual, evolutionary change, based on rapprochement, as opposed to radical and violent change with the use or threat of force.

The Beginning of Peaceful Change I have briefly recalled these familiar facts to help us realize that even during the Cold War period, when the system of security between East and West was essentially based on ideological and military confrontation and maintaining the status quo, conditions were slowly maturing to allow peaceful change of the international system. The signing of the Helsinki Final Act was an important stage in this process of change. The document was signed by the leaders of 33 European states as well as the United States and Canada. Subsequent landmarks in this process were the Charter of Paris for a New Europe (1990); the adoption of a new mandate and new institutions at the second OSCE Summit in Helsinki (1992); and, finally, reformulating the process initiated in Helsinki, the creation of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Budapest in 1994, which came into effect on 1 January 1995. Today, the Organization encompasses not just 35 but 57 countries in Europe, North America, and Asia. While the failure of the OSCE process in the 1990s and 1980s was to provide peoples living under communist rule with an “umbrella” so that they could enjoy individual rights and political freedoms, for more than 20 years after the collapse of the totalitarian regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, other tasks became a priority. Initially, these consisted of the limitation, reduction, and elimination on a grand scale of almost 70,000 systems of conventional arms (under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe/CFE and the adapted CFE Treaty) and the development of new Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs). The next stage was the institutionalization of various forms and means of managing crises, preventing conflict, eliminating tensions, and identifying political solutions to crisis situations. One effort to effectively respond to the new challenges and threats was the decision taken 20 years ago to establish the office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM). Many other institutions were also created under the auspices of the OSCE, including the Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) in Vienna, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in Warsaw, the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM), and the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC). Many OSCE missions that no longer exist have played an important role as well. There are also institutions that have played no role, and could be described as “aborted efforts” – dead from the start – although formally they still exist. A pointed example is the Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, whose creation 20 years ago was welcomed with great hopes and expectations by some countries (Switzerland and France). Their expectations have not been realized. It would be naïve to think that the establishment of an institution can by itself solve any problems. Institutions should follow problems and not the other way around. Institutionalized Ineffectiveness There is a widespread belief today that the existing multilateral security institutions are not living up to our hopes and expectations. As a result, we are witnessing the gradual marginalization of some of these institutions. They continue to exist by virtue of inertia, but the states that created them and are represented in them attach increasingly less importance to their activities. This leads to the question: What are the sources and causes of this...
present in Russia. And these alternative opinions are more in tune with enlightened leadership, governments and citizens on the one hand, and individuals and minority groups, on the other hand, to competition among the institutions, which is a natural phenomenon. Despite various verbal assurances that they would work together – recently for example Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and President Barack Obama met in Moscow in May 2013 and discussed issues ranging from energy to Afghanistan – there is a long way to go before we really see a transatlantic free trade zone, as suggested by Angela Merkel seven years ago, was recently embraced by President Barack Obama. On 20 March 2013, Radoslaw Sikorski, the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, declared in Sejm: “We should create a transatlantic free trade area agreement […]”

In the “institutionalized ineffectiveness”? On the one hand, we have an abundance, a kind of inflation of different types of institutions in the Euro-Atlantic area. This applies, in particular, to countries that are members of NATO and the European Union, as well as the Council of Europe and the OSCE. This leads to competition among the institutions, which is a natural phenomenon. Despite various verbal assurances that they would work together – to be cooperative rather than competitive and interlocking rather than “interblocking” – in practice we are seeing institutions duplicating each other, competing for seats, shifting resources, sometimes crossing each other’s non-intervention in internal affairs. The security of gross vs. public, group, individual, and state interests is the primary responsibility of states. In this respect, states do not expect effective intervention, rather than passivity and “non-intervention”. Yet, some countries continue to invoke the principle of non-intervention in their internal matters, which, in their minds, fall under the discretionary 57 power of the state. Such an approach illustrates a contradiction that lawyers call contradictio in adjecto. Countries in the Euro-Atlantic area have recognized the catalogue of European values agreed upon in the OSCE constitutional documents as their common foundation, but they have stuck to their own specific interpretations of these principles and values. So far, they have not given precise and explicit meaning to the principle of non-intervention. This can be a decisive importance and need to decide, if needed, to make a new proposal to develop a new Euro-Atlantic Security Forum. In 2010, NATO summit in Lisbon, 19 November 2010, para. 17, at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_68580.htm.

It was recently embraced by President Barack Obama.
Nothing yet...

Europe's role in a multipolar world...
should be maintained. Narratives serve to rationalize and validate strategies and actions in a formative period of international security. The long-term objective of a norm-based European security order – a security community – has been disavowed, but because each side in the clash between Russia and the West claims that the other has broken it. As interpretations of developments in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region, origins; and some pertain to our living together on the European continent. Among the latter is the Ukraine crisis, which clearly shows that the Helsinki Consensus is being challenged – not because it has entered into the era of a polycentric security system, where new players and non-state actors will challenge the traditional security order. To sum up – a thought of a general nature: The future is not determined by any historical necessity. Nations and states, international communities, and individual people make choices every day. These choices determine the future. As the French thinker Thérèse Delpech, who died in 2012, and whose strategic deliberations about the world’s future are well worth remembering, wrote: “It would be a mistake to claim that nothing enables us to imagine the future: we usually go in the direction our thinking takes us.”19 I have tried to present my thoughts on what should be done to prevent events from developing out of control. It is up to us, the nations of Europe and their leaders, to make the right decisions. One thing is certain, however: Decisions that are made now will determine our common future as well as the future of European nations and the entire Euro-Atlantic region. 18 National Intelligence Council (US), Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds, s.l., December 2012, p. 4. 19 Thérèse Delpech: Savage Century: Back to Barbarism, Washington, DC, 2007, p. 83. The OSCE Participating States: Domestic Developments and Multilateral Commitment to an Eurasian security community and the role of the OSCE. Conference Materials. 03.10.2013. 22 Ömer Burhan Tütüzel Euro Atlantic and Eurasian Security community: a pipe dream? : 27 Irina Chernykh Fragmentation of the Eurasian Space? Unfortunately, the problem of security provision in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian space has not been sufficiently elaborated either theoretically or practically. In our opinion, based on paragraph 1 of the Astana Declaration, which refers to a free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security space, stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok, the talk can only be about the territory of 57 OSCE member states. Within the OSCE, a new Kazakh-French initiative has sought to create a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian “security community”, and to develop an action plan to achieve this goal. Italy has suggested a “road map” with its vision of a path towards the fairer organization of European security, define their role and place in the new multipolar world order. The Astana Summit, to which the heads of key international organizations have been invited in addition to the Heads of State or Government of the OSCE’s 56 participating states, offers a wonderful opportunity to formulate a collective, “regional” answer to these global challenges. Of course, this will require political will and a readiness to leave behind old phobias and take a fresh look at our opportunities to act as a single “security community”. Europe – by which we mean here the OSCE area – faces a multitude of challenges, some, such as terrorism or climate change, have external origins; and some pertain to our living together on the European continent. Among the latter is the Ukraine crisis, which clearly shows that the Helsinki Consensus is being challenged – not because it has been a tragic mistake, but because each side in the clash between Russia and the West claims that the other has broken it. As interpretations of developments in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region, narratives serve to rationalize and validate strategies and actions in a formative period of international security. The long-term objective of a norm-based European security order – a security community – should be maintained.