

The Attitude of Participating States Toward the OSCE

When the governments of 55 States on three different continents agree to participate in the OSCE and to make harmonious decisions there on the most varied issues of security policy, the commonality thus achieved does not mean that they do not have differing motives, interests and objectives in so doing - quite apart from the fact that outside of the unity demonstrated in and through the OSCE they continue to pursue their own concerns.

During the period before the end of East-West antagonism it was relatively easy, compared with the present, to define and classify the constellations of interests amongst participating States. For one thing, the number of countries involved was more than one third smaller - 35 instead of 55; moreover, they could be assigned, in accordance with the way they viewed themselves and the way others saw them, to one of three blocs (NATO, Warsaw Pact, neutral/non-aligned), thus limiting their opportunities for deviational behavior and the extent of individual interests they might pursue.

Even so, there were from the very beginning certain particular situations and stubbornly protected special interests within the pan-European concert which proved to be very persistent. For that reason, the 35 participants in the period before 1989 were also divided into five groups: the super powers, the two German states, Alliance members with special roles to play such as France and Romania, the other Alliance members, and the neutral and non-aligned countries.¹

A number of external characteristics which have remained more or less constant make it possible under present-day conditions to categorize the participating States, of which there are now 55. One approach involves the level of participation in the OSCE's budget which since the Helsinki Summit of 1992 has been determined by the size of the gross national product, permitting a division of the 55 countries into four groups in accordance with their social and economic strength. In this calculation, there are seven countries which each contribute more than five percent, twelve which contribute one percent or more, twelve which contribute more and 24 which contribute less than one-half percent to the OSCE budget. At US Dollars 28 million (1996, excluding the budget for the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina), the size of the OSCE budget is relatively small; payment is

¹ Thus, for example, Norbert Ropers and Peter Schlotter, *Regimeanalyse und KSZE-Prozeß* [Regime Analysis and the CSCE Process], in: Beate Kohler-Koch, *Regime in den internationalen Beziehungen* [Regimes in International Relations], Baden-Baden 1989, p. 319 ff.

obligatory and thus the sharing of these costs by participating States throws no light on the level of their interest in the OSCE. Nevertheless, a look at the first group of payers, which together provide just about 60 percent of the budget, makes clear who the main actors in the OSCE are: the United States, the Russian Federation, the four big EU countries (Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom) and, in addition, Canada.

At the other end of the financial scale we find almost half of the participating States, the 24 small and mini-states, along with the economically weak OSCE States. Their representatives, by the way they vote, can in some cases achieve a burdensome and time-consuming effect or they can present intelligent ideas, but they are scarcely able to exert a positive and creative influence.² Still, there are sharp differences among these participants in terms of the importance, actual or potential, which the OSCE has for them. On the one side, there are countries like Andorra, Iceland, the Holy See, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco and San Marino whose political leadership (apart from the special interests of the Holy See) view participation in the OSCE only as a matter of prestige and representation. On the other side, this group also contains the main contingent of countries which represent a significant security risk for others and at the same time have security requirements of their own, such as the Slovak Republic, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Slovenia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. It should be pointed out that - with the notable exception of Cyprus - these are all countries where an OSCE mission is active or which the High Commissioner on National Minorities has had reason to visit. They do not, however, exhaust the list of problem countries in the OSCE area. At least three others from the two groups in the middle range of budget contributions must be included - the Ukraine, Hungary and Romania - whose minority problems have also claimed the attention of the OSCE but whose relationship to the OSCE is different for other reasons.

If we view the OSCE from the standpoint of an insurance operation we see that as a provider of security it is a fine address for those who do the most damage: the 20 biggest risks pay about one-sixteenth of the budget while more than half of it is borne by six countries that harbor no risks of their own. They do, however, insure themselves against risks created by others and, compared with these, they have by far the most to lose in an absolute material sense.

Even if these and similar quantitative calculations are interesting, it is clear that they hardly get at the heart of the relationship between participating States and the OSCE. Still, size categories strongly influence one's view of

² An illustration of this is the objection of one of these countries to the proposal that the term "OSCE members" be used instead of "OSCE participating States".

oneself and of others as well as one's perceptions and thinking and, hence, the effects produced by participants. Quantity is translated into quality and political importance sets up a relationship of centers and peripheries. This kind of pattern makes it possible to identify three main categories in the OSCE community.

Thus, the Russian Federation, the United States and the European Union constitute the three big elements, although the latter requires further differentiation according to the character of its members. The Central Eastern European countries, from the Baltic Republics to Bulgaria, form a second group whose political and economic elites have, since 1990, been looking toward the West rather than the East, whether to the Brussels of the European Union or the Brussels of NATO and, hence, the United States. The third category of OSCE participating States, finally, is represented by the members of the CIS, with the exception of the Russian Federation. For a variety of reasons, one must distinguish within this group between the trans-Caucasian (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) and the Central Asian (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) on the one hand and the Eastern European (Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova) states on the other. Not included in this classification are the smallest countries, which have already been mentioned, and three economically strong ones (Norway, Canada and Switzerland) along with Turkey. The first three have the kind of disinterested objectivity which qualifies them for leading roles in the OSCE, as Switzerland is now forcefully demonstrating by supplying the Chairman-in-Office. Turkey, however, does not share those qualities of objective distance and commitment owing to its partisan support for the Islamic countries and its antagonism toward Russia and Greece. On various occasions and in connection with various issues the leaders of the Russian Federation have demonstrated their interest in the further development and strengthening of the OSCE, as indeed the Soviet Union had done as well.³ This position has obviously not changed since the Budapest Summit. Russia has put forward proposals for discussion in connection with the Security Model for the 21st Century. The Russian delegation to the OSCE Economic Forum has again expressed its support for expanding the economic dimension and made suggestions on this subject. The Russian stance in connection with the human dimension has been cooperative thus helping the structure of the OSCE to win recognition. For example, the Russian representative in the Permanent Council supported the United States and the EU in their sharp evaluation of the limits which Belarus had imposed

³ Cf. Andrej Zagorski, Rußland und die OSZE - Erwartungen und Enttäuschungen [Russia and the OSCE - Expectations and Disappointments], in: Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik an der Universität Hamburg/IFSH [Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH] (Ed.), OSZE-Jahrbuch [OSCE Yearbook] 1995, Baden-Baden 1995, pp. 109-119.

on freedom of the press and the freedom to demonstrate.⁴ The Russian government shared responsibility for the mediation efforts of the Mission to Moldova.⁵ Its attitude toward other missions has been more ambivalent; this is particularly true of the delicate work of the OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya. Obviously, Russia may legitimize its policy by appealing to Russian interests as it interprets them. Its interest in the economic dimension, for example, is tied to a proposal for the creation of a pan-European economic zone which is clearly animated by the expectation of influencing projects and procedures, and perhaps the distribution of resources outside of the European Union. Nor does the Russian interest in developing the European Security Model go so far as to imply that the Russian Federation wants to modify its privileged status in the UN Security Council. For that reason, Russia will continue to reject a priority position for the OSCE vis-a-vis the United Nations and it is unlikely to support any "OSCE first" mechanism. While the Russian Federation's attitude toward strengthening the OSCE is basically constructive, even if sometimes poorly articulated and ambivalent, the United States' relationship has been explicitly ambiguous.⁶ The United States opposes any further institutionalization of the OSCE or even giving it legal status; nor would such a step have a chance of success given the majority situation in Congress. The United States is opposed to a form of relationship with European institutions such as the Council of Europe in which the US would only have the status of an associate. On the other hand, the United States has continued in the OSCE to pursue its traditional human rights policy, as demonstrated by its support for the ODIHR and the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The OSCE's role in the arms control regime of the Dayton Agreement is also owing to the support of the United States.⁷ Obviously, the US no longer fears that NATO will be undermined or degraded by the OSCE. To a noteworthy extent, the role of the OSCE is determined by the attitude of the great powers towards its newly created institutions and by their participation in their activities. Like the Russian Federation, the United States favors retaining and perhaps enlarging the economic dimension because it offers a way of opposing the European Union's claim of exclusive re-

⁴ Cf. 76th Session of the Permanent Council, 27 June 1996, Agenda item 12.

⁵ An account of this, from the beginning to the breakthrough, is in: Rolf Welberts, *Der Einsatz der OSZE in der Republik Moldau* [The the OSCE Involvement in the Republic of Moldova], in: *OSZE-Jahrbuch 1995*, cited above (Note 3), pp. 193-210, esp. p. 206ff.

⁶ A detailed account can be found in: Jonathan Dean, *Die Vereinigten Staaten und die OSZE - im Wechsel von Förderung und "wohlwollender Vernachlässigung"* [The United States and the OSCE - Alternating between Support and "Benign Neglect"], in: *Ibid.*, pp. 99-108.

⁷ Cf. Rüdiger Hartmann, *The Significance of Regional Arms Control Efforts for the Future of Conventional Arms Control in Europe, Exemplified by the Arms Control Negotiations in Accordance with the Dayton Agreement*, in this volume, pp. 253-263.

sponsibility for Europe. Both great powers, Russia and the United States, displayed a foreign policy in 1996 which, owing to their presidential elections, was motivated by considerations of domestic policy. This orientation also explains why there has so far been no progress in the discussion of the OSCE Security Model for the 21st Century which might have provided guidance for the forthcoming Lisbon Summit conference on 2 and 3 December 1996. Great powers tend to use international organizations as instruments for their own policy. The OSCE is no exception to this rule. Smaller states, on the other hand, see in multilateralism an opportunity to oppose the hegemonial arrogance of the great powers and to win recognition for themselves in a constructive way. An example of this is provided by the other North American OSCE State, Canada, whose representatives have dedicated themselves to strengthening the CSCE/OSCE, whether through institutionalization or the recruitment of suitable personnel.⁸

In OSCE bodies the member countries of the European Union, after prior consultation, present a common position, with the representative of the country which has the Presidency acting as spokesman; in the first half of 1996 this was Italy, in the second half, Ireland. Occasionally, as at the opening of the Budapest Review Conference in 1994, a representative of the European Commission asks for the floor. These positions, worked out in the framework of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and presented by a single spokesman on behalf of all EU countries, do not rule out individual EU members taking the floor; the EU is not, after all, a participating State of the OSCE. One may ask to what extent this concerted activity of 15 states promotes decision-making within the OSCE - in the Permanent Council, for example - or whether it squelches possibly interesting initiatives by individual participating States, thus preventing their discussion by the whole OSCE. At any rate, it is well known that the present government of the United Kingdom takes just as negative an attitude toward proposals of other EU members to strengthen the OSCE as it does with respect to the EU itself. One can only guess whether internal EU conflicts of this kind have also paralysed the enthusiasm for reform which representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany showed in the earlier phase of the CSCE. In any event, the EU countries, with Germany in the van, have shown no interest in vitalizing the economic dimension of the OSCE. In its overall relationship to the OSCE, the German government has so far continued to take a positive attitude and it wants to table again the proposals which it, along with the

⁸ Other aspects are covered in: Michel Fortmann/Jens-U. Hettmann, Kanada und die KSZE/OSZE - Zwischen Enthusiasmus, Maximalismus und Ernüchterung [Canada and the CSCE/OSCE - Between Enthusiasm, Maximalism and Disillusionment], in: OSZE-Jahrbuch 1995, cited above (Note 3), pp. 137-144.

Netherlands, prepared in vain for Budapest.⁹ France, too, continues to declare its interest in further development of the OSCE in a variety of ways.¹⁰ While the positions of the big participating States - the Russian Federation, the United States and the group of countries which make up the EU - have remained more or less constant, a similar attitude does not exist, or is less obvious, in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. At the time of the great change they were strong advocates of the CSCE and favored strengthening it. Their interest in the OSCE has waned, however, as they have begun to see a prospect of membership in NATO and/or the European Union. This is particularly true of the Czech Republic.¹¹ Poland's attitude toward the CSCE/OSCE has in part gone through a similar process of change, but without degenerating into indifference, especially with regard to recent thinking on the necessity of including Russia in European security structures. Rather, Polish diplomacy has taken initiatives of its own to develop the OSCE in its own interest and to avoid being given the role of a dependent variable in the triangular constellation constituted by US-Russia-EU.¹² Hungary has increased its prominence in a similar way, as well as the prominence of the OSCE as a whole, not least owing to the outstanding position of Chairman-in-Office.¹³ It is interesting to observe, in connection with Hungary, that a participating State which holds the OSCE Chairmanship is forced to adapt the definition of its interests and its foreign policy to OSCE needs, if not to subordinate it to them.¹⁴ Apart from the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary, the relationship to the OSCE of all other states which emerged from the Soviet Union or belonged to the Warsaw Pact has been determined in particular by the fact that *nolens volens* they are the object of an operational interest on the part of the OSCE, whether through the presence of missions, visits by the High Commissioner on National Minorities, or intensive monitoring and assessment of their elections by the ODIHR or the Parliamentary Assembly. The role of an "object" is by nature ambivalent. On the one hand, the OSCE's involvement makes it easier to limit the costs of conflicts, whether already existent, latent or incipient - especially those that have

⁹ Regarding this proposal, which is called the "Kinkel-Kooijmans Initiative", see: Herbert Honsowitz, "OSZE zuerst" ["OSCE First"], in: Vereinte Nationen [United Nations] 2/1995, pp. 49-54.

¹⁰ Cf. Régis de Belenet, France and the OSCE, in this volume, pp. 87-92.

¹¹ Cf. Jan Pechacek, The Czech Republic and the OSCE, in this volume, pp. 105-110.

¹² A detailed discussion of this is in: Jerzy M. Nowak, Poland and the OSCE: In Search of More Effective Security in Europe, in this volume, pp. 111-128.

¹³ On this, see: Pál Dunay, Zusammenarbeit in Konflikten: Der Amtierende Vorsitzende und der Generalsekretär [Cooperation in Conflicts: The Chairman-in-Office and the Secretary General], in: OSZE-Jahrbuch 1995, cited above (Note 3), pp. 399-410; István Gyarmati, The Hungarian Chairmanship and the Chechnya Conflict, in this volume, pp. 175-184.

¹⁴ Cf. László Kovács, The Future Role of the OSCE in European Security Architecture, in this volume, pp. 57-67.

an international dimension resulting, for example, from the complaints of minorities, particularly when they are of Russian origin. On the other hand, the presence of the OSCE demonstrates that these countries have not been able to come adequately to terms with the problems themselves - whatever that may mean in the individual case - and may even be forced into a compromise which they would have preferred to avoid if left to their own devices. Thus it can happen that the political elite in these countries may initially regard the presence of OSCE representatives as useful and later come to see them as burdensome. Latvia and the Ukraine offer examples for this kind of development; only under pressure and with many reservations were they willing to agree to an extension of the OSCE Missions in their countries.¹⁵

The trans-Caucasian and, in particular, the Central Asian states have a special affinity for the OSCE because it, in addition to being a place where they can go to get help with their problems, provides the only institutional tie they have to the core countries of Europe.¹⁶

The attitude of some OSCE participating States - e.g. on its continued institutionalization, harmonization of arms control and disarmament, the initiation of round tables, etc. - is quite frequently determined not by their resistance against external intervention (by the OSCE) in their internal affairs but by rivalries between them or mistrust of other participating States.¹⁷ This can be seen, for example, in the three-cornered relationship between Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation or in the relationship between Turkey and the Russian Federation insofar as it involves matters concerning the Central Asian countries, or in the relationship between Hungary and Slovakia with respect to the personnel policy of the OSCE. In this way uncooperative forms of behavior are introduced into the OSCE's efforts to achieve cooperative security.

Now, six years after the end of East-West antagonism, there is growing annoyance amongst the Eastern and Central European participating States over the fact that the OSCE continues to look stubbornly toward the East while turning its back on conflicts and violations of human rights in the West. To cite two examples, it is striking that the OSCE has taken no preventive measures in the obvious conflict between Turkey and Greece and that it disregards the Turkish measures against its Kurdish population. After all, a Canadian politician has already announced his intention to ask the OSCE to take on the question of Indians' rights in his country.

¹⁵ Cf. 76th Session of the Permanent Council, 27 June 1996, Agenda items 8 and 9 and Annex Decisions Nos. 131 and 132.

¹⁶ This is eloquently expressed in: Alois Reznik, *Uzbekistan and the OSCE*; Omar A. Sultanov, *Kyrgyzstan and the OSCE*, both in this volume, pp. 139-145 and 129-138.

¹⁷ Rüdiger Hartmann gives examples, cited above (Note 7).

The interests of the OSCE participating States are not only determined by their social problems or external threats, or by their alliances and rivalries with others, but also by the relationships they have with other international organizations. This has already become clear in connection with the Russian Federation and its privileged position in the United Nations, in the case of the United States and NATO, and in the relations of the Western European countries to the EU. The often cited "comparative advantage" of the OSCE is seen differently by the various participating States. Nor is it consistent; it can, even within the same "dimension", look different from one case to another, e.g. human rights when viewed in the light of the Council of Europe or UNHCR. Depending on accidental factors or tactical considerations, the governments may in one instance show a preference for the OSCE and a moment later turn to another international organization. This depends on decisions which are neither made nor heard in the halls of the OSCE but in distant capitals and often enough are purely arbitrary or rest on finely worked out calculations which soon become impenetrable even for the participants.