

The OSCE in a New Environment¹

Reflecting on European security and the forms it may take in the future is an exercise inherited from the Cold War - one which involves a Europe viewed as a security space with extensions reaching as far as San Francisco and Vladivostok. What has changed, however, is the political framework for these reflections. To be sure, "East" and "West" have not yet become mere directional terms as NATO proclaimed at the end of the strategic ice age. The patterns of thought established over a period of forty years are too deeply ingrained for that. However, we have at least made a beginning at thinking in co-operative rather than confrontational terms; at giving priority to political concerns, including social policy, rather than to the military; and, finally, at abandoning the conflict between armament, promoted by those on the right, and disarmament, favoured by those on the left.

Emphasizing common elements more strongly than divisive factors makes it easier to give joint consideration to the creation of a European order for tomorrow. The price we pay for this is, to be sure, a blurring of hitherto valid parameters that have been in general use, sometimes hardened into stereotypes. They gave momentum and shape to common defence efforts, strategic doctrines and a variety of integration projects. Thus standards were established which could be used in public relations to evaluate friend and foe, shifts in the strategic balance and changes on the political front line. Almost nothing has remained of this in today's Europe, which is devoid of enemies and where borders have lost much of their significance. In short, the widely known and much used "Military Balance" of the International Institute for Strategic Studies has been "reduced" from the status of a political document to a mere collection of military data. However interesting such data may be, they do no longer shape or reflect new strategies and alliances. For there is no defining structure to give military forces their weight and political significance.

On the face of it this is a fortunate turn of events. The "soundless disappearance" of a reality in international affairs which put its stamp on the landscape of Europe beginning at the latest with the founding of the Soviet Union was and remains an unprecedented event, one bordering on a miracle.² But it leaves behind a stage peopled by many more actors - both resurrected and new ones -

1 Updated and expanded version of the article "Neue Konturen Europäischer Sicherheit" [New Contours of European Security] which appeared in the 12/1996 issue of the journal "Internationale Politik" [International Policy].

2 Cf. Volker Gerhardt, *Fahnen schwenken vor den Tribünen der Macht* [Flag Waving in Front of the Platforms of Power], in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 21/22 September 1996, p. 69.

who are still a long way from fitting together into anything like a coherent ensemble. What today is called "European security" has become hard, if not impossible, to define. What concerns the "man on the street" in Belfast, Berlin or Belgrade when it comes to "security" is no longer (if it ever was) identical with protection against external aggression, war and destruction. It includes, of course, that element, too. But nowadays it is the concern over one's social and personal security that without doubt predominates in the minds of the overwhelming majority of Europeans. Thus even what is generally understood by "European security" and has been given institutional form is not a permanently established condition but a process subject to constant change.

This means, at the same time, that a "security model" which the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is desperately seeking to design for the next century, cannot exist for the Europe of today and tomorrow. More importantly, such "model" should not be debated at all because it conveys the illusion that security is a clearly defined concept which can easily be dealt with in institutional terms. It is the illusion of a static security policy which is no doubt comforting in bureaucratic terms but politically soporific.

Even the declaration adopted at the OSCE Summit Conference in Lisbon does not help much to move things along. In it the Heads of State or Government note with great optimism that the work on this Security Model is making progress and will be continued "actively".³ Indeed, the Conference went a step farther and, with appropriate caution, announced its determination to "consider developing a Charter on European Security". Those are ambitious objectives indeed. They seem all the more ambitious when one recalls the rapidly changing security landscape of Europe. Thus it remains highly uncertain whether the Model and the Charter have even a remote chance of becoming reality. They are - there is hardly anyone in OSCE circles who has any illusions about this - largely a function of NATO's decision, taken in mid-1997, to admit Central European countries into the Alliance.

We did not really need the scarcely fathomable tragedy in former Yugoslavia in order to be warned against excessive expectations regarding the Security Model and a Security Charter respected on all sides. The crises, first in Yugoslavia, then in Albania, and now in Kosovo, make abundantly clear that the Europe which has so unexpectedly opened itself towards the East lives in very different historical and political time zones, if not in different periods of civilization. Many things that we regarded as overcome or settled came once again to the fore: borders were called into question or newly established; in place of the old ideological confrontation between East and West we were confronted by economic disparities and the need for political reform. The centuries old fear of external aggression is giving way to the fear of internal dangers. The latter appears

3 See the text of the "Lisbon Document 1996", reprinted in this volume, pp. 419-446, here: p. 429.

to be the stronger fear because it affects much more directly the security and survival of the individual and of his familiar surroundings. Hence it is no longer the strength of the national state but its weakness, its inability to offer its citizens comprehensive protection that threatens security and stability on the continent.⁴ The case of Albania, if we look at it closely, turns out not to be a "security problem" in the traditional sense. It is, rather, a case in which those weaknesses came into play which can push states with traditional societies in conjunction with modern developments - such as the almost unlimited availability of weapons of all kinds - to the brink of self-destruction.

These are developments which, beyond the hurly-burly of daily events, are taking place in more and more countries. It means that their security concerns and challenges are becoming ever more alike. Germany's or France's problems with immigration or organized crime may be quantitatively more important than those of Austria or Belgium owing to the size of these countries. But the differences between them and the problems of smaller countries are at most marginal when it comes to their essential nature and the ways of dealing with them. Fear of an attack by a powerful neighbour is being replaced by the concern that the neighbour, whether larger or smaller, may not be able to deal effectively with this new kind of security risks. They all face the same questions about their ability to function and reform themselves under the pressures of expanded global competition.

Catalogue of Uncertainties

All of this enriches the catalogue of uncertainties on the European scene. With unavoidable simplification, others can be identified, including some with specific geographic locations. They differ from one another, of course. Viewed together, however, they hardly give the optimistic picture of an internally stable and externally secure continent as whose all-too-natural objective a large majority of Europeans see economic and political unity.

The first and doubtless biggest uncertainty concerns the status and role of Russia and the position it should and must assume in the Europe of tomorrow. It is all too easy to comfort oneself with the soothing thought that Russia, after the double trauma of its withdrawal from Central Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union, is in a transitional phase. Far more important is the question of the direction in which this transition will ultimately move the country. No one can predict the nature and mission of this giant empire which today is vacillating between crude Manchester liberalism and an unfettered Mafia and wavering between Europe and Asia. The West's ability to influence the ultimate

4 See, *inter alia*, Philippe Delmas, *Le bel avenir de la guerre* [War's Rosy Future], Paris 1995, p. 9.

definition of its goals is certainly modest. But we ought to take seriously the possibility that a Russia which, in the aftermath of NATO's eastward enlargement, feels marginalized and may turn against the West.

The second uncertainty relates to the future of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), that is the former Soviet Republics grouped around Russia, with the exception of the Baltic states. The extent to which these countries can survive as independent entities will depend not only on the improvement of their domestic political circumstances and of their economies. Related developments in Russia will also exercise a strong influence in both areas. It is thus of immediate interest to the rest of Europe whether such a large and centrally-located country as Ukraine remains independent or once again becomes, in whole or in its eastern parts, a part of a Russia expanding towards the West. Of no less interest to the West is whether countries such as Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan will return to Moscow's control or will be independently able to determine who can have access to their oil and gas reserves, and who may benefit from them. It remains an open question whether the members of the CIS, especially Russia, will be willing and able to develop the former into a functioning institution. As long as there is uncertainty on this point the CIS will be less a factor of stability and more a source of friction and unfulfilled expectations.

The third uncertainty has to do with the area of South-eastern Europe. It might be called the "greater Balkans". It extends from Croatia (which does not wish to consider itself part thereof) to eastern Turkey. This already gives us an idea of its geographic extent and its political, religious and ethnic variety. That in turn points to manifold sources of conflict. The most painful of all is the fragile Bosnian Federation; the bloodiest are the fights with and amongst the Kurds; and the most important is the fate of Turkey. The extent to which the latter (and, in a different way, Serbia) are or shall be a part of the European security community or will remain outsiders is a question that presents itself for the first time again since the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.

The Mediterranean region has also returned to the security policy agenda. Only definable in terms of its geographic contours, it has recently come to be regarded as a (possibly overestimated) source of various risks. Leaving the Middle East aside for the moment, it is especially the course of developments in North Africa that we must think about.

Between Egypt and Morocco there stretches an arch of Arabic countries which have in common a long history and the Islamic faith but are separated by many differences of a political, economic and demographic kind. Who would dare predict whether Egypt, with its relentless population growth, its water shortage and its disturbing inability to enact reforms, will be able to enter the next century intact; or, if it cannot, what this will mean not only for the Middle East but for the Arab world as a whole? Concern over the fate of Algeria, particularly in France, finds its logical extension in the European Union whose eastward

enlargement has recently been complemented and compensated for by increased engagement in the south. Even more than in Central Eastern Europe, the agreements of association with North Africa have been stimulated by justifiable security concerns. One more and highly emotional problem is the thorny question of still divided Cyprus and its future relationship with the EU. Linked to it is the even more complex issue of Turkey's relationship with, and role in, the Europe of tomorrow, referred to already.

The circumstances surrounding the fifth and sixth uncertainties are very different. One concerns the future of Germany, the other the future extent and durability of the American presence in Europe.

Since its unification, Germany has incontestably become what a German historian bluntly but accurately characterized as the "Central Power of Europe".⁵ This throws up questions of all kinds. They relate to Germany's influence on decisive questions of European policy. These could have to do with the nature and the role of the European Currency Union or the staging and extent of the European Union's eastward enlargement, including Germany's weight and responsibility therein. Germany's ceasing to be the motor of European unification would be just as consequential as if it should fail to put through the reform of its overextended social security net without turbulence. The question whether a geographically expanded mission for the *Bundeswehr* will create tensions at home as well as unease abroad is as uncertain as are the consequences of German support for the eastward enlargement of the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO) for the continuing effectiveness of the agreements on conventional and nuclear disarmament in Europe.

Finally, since the end of the Cold War the trans-Atlantic relationship is no longer what it was. Europe is trying, awkwardly enough, to pull itself out of the American shadow. The United States is trying, hardly less awkwardly, to find a justification for its role on the world stage which can be sold and defended at home. This makes it harder to maintain a relationship that has been built up over a half century. It calls for new common interests which are, however, harder to define. Thus the Damocles sword of a "cultural breach" between America and Europe⁶ continues to hang over the Atlantic. This points at one and the same time to the risk of a further drifting apart and to the opportunity for a more broadly based community of interests. In any event, it means both uncertainty and challenge, especially for the security of Europe.

5 Hans Peter Schwarz, *Die Zentralmacht Europas* [The Central Power of Europe], Berlin 1994.

6 See Werner Weidenfeld, *Kulturbruch mit Amerika* [Cultural Breach with America], Gütersloh 1996.

This overview, though vastly simplified and tailored to certain geographic areas, can nevertheless help us to reach a number of conclusions that will throw light on the new dimensions of European security. The first conclusion, which is neither surprising nor entirely new, is that Europe's security is being increasingly influenced by developments outside the area. At issue here are not only the changes in America's (now more differentiated) interests vis-à-vis Europe and not only Europe's dependence on Middle Eastern oil, obvious and perceptible since the 1973 crisis at the latest. Rather, the range of potential crises that could affect Europe's security has grown larger, both geographically and in terms of content.

No model relating to the future of European security, however refined, can ignore this aspect, difficult as it may be to grasp. The reciprocal relationships between European immigration policy and population growth in the Mediterranean area, between economic assistance and political stabilization, are indeed far too obvious to ignore.

This leads, at least in part, to the second conclusion. For the first time since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, European politics are acquiring again what we may call "an Islamic dimension" - both in the traditional field of relations between states and in the social and religious fields, which are more difficult to grasp. The dissolution of the Soviet Union has led to a revival of Islamic states in the Caucasus and Central Asia; the Bosnian Federation deliberately stresses its Islamic component; Turkey is threatened by a crucial test of strength between secular Kemalism and Islamic conservatism;⁷ millions of Moslems live in European countries and terrorist groups operate there as the long arm of the Kurds in eastern Turkey or of fanatics in Algeria. Even those who take a more detached view of "Islamic fundamentalism", which is all too often cast in crude terms, cannot overlook the political potential, whether for good or evil, of this protean "Islamic dimension". The call for an "Islamic OSCE", which can be heard from Central Asia, provides an as yet uncertain indication of this.

This situation places demands on Europe's governments and societies which are no doubt entirely new. The governments have long since lost their rightful monopoly on the use of force. As far as protection of territory is concerned it is hardly relevant any more. With regard to protection of citizens and society and of the structures that support them - economy, infrastructure, health - it has been greatly weakened by the almost unlimited availability of weapons to sub-state actors. Today, dissatisfied minorities, separatists and Mafia gangs pursue their objectives with their own weapons. For those affected by their actions the distinctions have long since become blurred between the legal or illegal use of

7 Cf. Udo Steinbach, *Die Türkei im 20. Jahrhundert* [Turkey in the 20th Century], Bergisch-Gladbach 1996.

power and the question of who offers protection to whom and what objectives are being pursued. No doubt the war in Bosnia was also fought over territory. But on closer examination it involved a collision between elements of ethnic, religious and cultural opposition which do not lend themselves to rational explanation. No wonder that the international community, with its traditional resources of diplomacy and armed force, turned out to be for a long time helpless in the face of such a phenomenon.

This leads to the third conclusion. It has to do with the role which should be played by those international organizations that are responsible for security and stability. All of them - from NATO to the European Union to the Council of Europe and the OSCE - are in one way or another creatures of the Cold War period. All of them are caught up in a process of enlargement, practically concluded in the case of the OSCE, still incomplete for the others. This is represented as a contribution to a pan-European order and to security based thereon. As indicated earlier, it is doubtful whether anything will come of this. Enlargement, initially at least, means separation from those remaining on the outside as well as creating a hierarchy and favouritism. That is one aspect. The other, probably more consequential, is that enlargement undertaken without clear criteria threatens to weaken the basis on which the existence and unique character of the organizations in question have hitherto been convincingly legitimated. Not all of the institutions mentioned have available to them an *acquis communautaire* which institutionally and legally is as well established as that of the European Union. But all of them have been, and remain, handles on European stability, harbours for building solidarity and thus - whether consciously or unconsciously - elements of the expanded view of security that now prevails. A Council of Europe that bends over backwards to admit countries with largely unstabilized democracies or with questionable democratic practices risks losing the function that has made it a pillar of democratically legitimated dependability. The Atlantic Alliance will have to entertain similar considerations if it wants to retain its most valuable *acquis*, namely its inner integrity and its "security culture" (Uwe Nerlich). The dilemma between the external expansion called for by European policy and the indispensable internal coherence needed for security and stability is by no means a trivial matter. In our thinking about the multiplicity of new security risks, however, the second aspect especially should be given the attention it deserves.

The OSCE as a Source of Hope?

We must expect, therefore, to be dealing with a politically diffuse, geographically broad and substantively complex environment in which many new actors, legal and illegal, play a role.

In this situation we have to ask ourselves about the missions and the capacity for action of the organizations responsible for the security and stability of Europe. Security policy is acquiring more and more a constitutive function of building and maintaining order on the continent. Originally (i.e. during the "Cold War") the roles were clearly circumscribed and distributed. As a result there were hardly any overlaps. The European Community, elevated by the Maastricht Treaty to a Union, had first and foremost the task of reconciling former enemies, supporting the reconstruction of a Western Europe torn by war and providing for its economic advancement. NATO, as the democratic counterpart to the Soviet dominated Warsaw Pact, was entrusted with joint defence and at the same time viewed as a trans-Atlantic bond between Western Europe and North America. The CSCE, for its part, was a much younger child of the institutional "founding period" in the late forties and fifties and set up a framework for dialogue, long interrupted, between the two camps. It was not until the thaw resulting from Gorbachev's *perestroika* that the CSCE assisted in arranging such concrete measures as conventional disarmament.

The end of the "Cold War" brought with it the end of this relatively clear division of labour. In itself, this did not have to be a negative development. Why shouldn't "free competition", which is in effect propagated and set forth even in the CSCE's Charter of Paris, be made into a fruitful subject also for co-operation between states? It quickly became clear, however, that established structures had created their own ways of thinking and that, in parallel with the dissolution of the fronts and the collapse of federations, almost all of these organizations proved incapable of resisting (or did not want to resist) the temptation or the felt responsibility to enlarge themselves. The OSCE has not grown geographically since 1989 (apart from the admission of Albania in 1991 and Andorra in 1996) but the number of participants has grown by leaps and bounds, from 35 to 55. As a result it has become more heterogeneous without becoming more efficient, despite (or perhaps because of) its new decision-making bodies, centres and High Commissioners. Its area of responsibility has expanded from the mediation of dialogue, which scarcely seemed to need institutional crutches, to include complex missions. It has come to be widely accepted in this role, without however receiving any financial compensation for its efforts. Dedicated to democracy and human rights, it is a kind of security guard without weapons and with inadequate personnel and material resources. No one dares to call its existence into question but few are prepared to strengthen it or make it more capable of decisive action. It remains an open question how the eastward enlargement of NATO will affect it. There are those who do not rule out the possibility that it will wither away to a wallflower or remain just a piece of scenery that will be mobilized only when no one else is able or willing to take over the job.

Things may not go that far. But wherever traditional security requirements are at stake almost all of the reform countries of Central Eastern Europe are pushing to

get into NATO. When it is a question of internal stability and security they look for help in and from the European Union.⁸ Against this background, the Code of Conduct and the proposed Security Charter almost inevitably remain marginal developments. This is not necessarily or primarily a result of the OSCE's inadequacy. Rather, it can be explained by the new developments in the security field described in the first part. It has to do with the complexity of the security concept and the way in which it is interpreted, weighed and dealt with in individual cases. Every country and every sensible government will of course want to defend itself and fight against threats such as organized crime and drug traffic. Likewise they will all claim that they have a right to "security" and that "security" is thus a good shared equally by all. What that means in daily practice is, however, an entirely different matter.

Europe and, *a fortiori*, other regions have not yet been able to create instruments for mastering these more comprehensive risks to security. There are a number of reasons for this. Almost all of them have to do with sensitivities related to outmoded thinking about sovereignty. It will not be possible to outsmart these anachronistic reactions from outside. But experience in the field of practical international co-operation may help. Here the OSCE may find its chance. The fact that it was able to get involved in Albania and in the domestic policy of that country is surely due, among other things, to the fact that the OSCE is neither a military-political alliance nor an international organization handicapped by the veto. This is far from making it into a panacea for Europe's new security needs. But it does give it a reserve function which a troubled Europe simply cannot do without.

8 Cf. Curt Gasteyger, *An Ambiguous Power, The European Union in a Changing World*, Gütersloh 1996.