

The OSCE's Role in European Security - A Norwegian View

The role of the OSCE in European security is well worth examining. This is, firstly, because the OSCE right now is proving its worth as a security organization throughout its region, from Vancouver to Vladivostok and from Murmansk to Marseilles, but also because the OSCE is a unique security organization working with soft means. Most people think of military alliances, and not of the OSCE, when they think of a security organization.

The effort to contain the Kosovo crisis is a prime example of the challenges the OSCE is facing. The Kosovo crisis, unfortunately, is also an example of how difficult it can be to resolve conflicts based on ethnic hatred and historical animosity in an environment with limited democratic traditions. Secondly, the OSCE has decided at its next Summit to adopt a charter, or document, that will define its role in European security. What we want is a more operative and effective OSCE, with a major role to play in European security.

Thirdly, Norway has been chosen to lead the Organization in 1999. This is an important task, and I will subsequently return to this, and to some of our priorities for the chairmanship.

Let me start, however, with a brief review of recent events. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the bipolar confrontation of the Cold War has given way to democracy and a market economy almost throughout the OSCE area. This is perhaps the most important, and most sweeping, political event in our generation. However, the numerous regional conflicts in Eastern Europe, which were previously held in check by the Cold War, have made parts of the OSCE area more unstable, and this is the field where the OSCE is operative. I firmly believe that non-compliance with the OSCE commitments on the human dimension, laid down in the Helsinki Final Act and later OSCE documents, is one of the main reasons for the political crises in Europe today. Increased compliance with the OSCE commitments, on the other hand, means increased stability and increased security for all.

Europe is changing rapidly, and the extent and depth of these changes pose a number of challenges that have an impact on the entire range of political, economic, social and environmental issues. Old conflicts have been replaced by enhanced security and co-operation, and a new partnership is being established between NATO and Russia. The Cold War and the balance of terror are history. The EU and NATO are inviting new member states to join, and regional patterns of co-operation are being expanded and strengthened. The question is, what is the role of the OSCE in the new Europe?

The OSCE has two features that distinguish it from other European and transatlantic security organizations: it has universal membership within its region, and it has unquestioned moral authority. Its predecessor, the CSCE, played a historic role in pulling down the Iron Curtain and paving the way for freedom and democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. One of the most important political events since the Second World War was the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. It laid down respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, as a basic value to which participating States are committed.

Thus the Final Act was a primary tool in the efforts to bring down the communist tyrannies. Helsinki committees were founded in most countries. Dissidents could demand that their governments stand by their commitments. We all remember how the oppressive regimes crumbled, one by one. But the end of the Cold War did not mean that we no longer needed the OSCE principles. On the contrary, it meant that we could go one step further. In 1990 and 1991, the Charter of Paris, the Copenhagen Document and the Moscow Document all refined the OSCE commitments on the human dimension. With these documents the term "internal affairs" ceased to be part of the vocabulary of legitimate policy in the OSCE area, and respect for OSCE commitments became the concern of all.

The answer to my question is that the OSCE is a security organization with an important role to play, as long as we maintain its unique character. I think we must be vigilant and prevent the OSCE from becoming just another international organization. It is perceived as a moral force by the nationals of our countries, and if this perception should fade it may be rendered ineffective. The OSCE is also the only European and trans-Atlantic security organization providing for full participation not only of Russia and the United States, but also of all the countries in the regions suffering from lack of stability and representing threats to security. These are primarily the countries of the Western Balkans and the former Soviet republics.

How, then, does the OSCE contribute to security? When we think of security, we tend to think of armed forces and hardware; of doctrines and military strategy, rather than moral authority. The OSCE has, of course, a military dimension. The Stockholm Conference in 1986 was a breakthrough in establishing military confidence- and security-building measures, and these arms control measures have since been refined. They now constitute a web of commitments that regulates military behaviour on our continent, and are thus an important stabilizing factor. The Vienna Document has been supplemented by the CFE Treaty, under which the most comprehensive disarmament in modern European history has taken place, and the Open Skies Treaty, which will give us free access to each other's airspace for aeroplanes carrying cameras.

NATO and the UN are security organizations that for historical reasons are better known and better understood than the OSCE, but the latter has had untold successes. The subtle and effective role it has played in conflict prevention and crisis management has, paradoxically, contributed to its relative anonymity. It is when diplomacy fails, and serious conflict breaks out, that media attention reaches its peak, and unfortunately not when serious situations with possibly grave repercussions are effectively avoided. It is the failures of diplomacy, not the victories, that make headlines. The successes enjoyed by the OSCE in Estonia and Latvia are good examples. The low-key, long-term work of the OSCE has in my view contributed significantly to keeping tension in the Baltic countries at a low level.

This leaves us with an information gap. The diplomats are comfortable with silent efforts and quiet successes, but the OSCE deserves the credit it has earned. The media and the public should be made more aware of what the OSCE actually does, and the participating States also have a responsibility to provide relevant information about what we do. The OSCE has proved to be an effective security organization by preventing and managing tension and crises while they were at a low level of intensity. It also has special competence in post-conflict democracy-building, one of the many remedies for conflict prevention. The main instruments are diplomatic, with low-key political work, often inside the country in question, and active involvement in the promotion of human rights, democracy and ethnic minority issues. Failures to honour the OSCE commitments in these fields are precisely the stuff conflict and instability are made of.

This brings me to the OSCE negotiations on a European security pact. It will in all likelihood fall to Norwegian diplomats to chair the negotiations in their final stages, in 1999. It has been decided that the pact, or document as some prefer to call it, will be adopted by an OSCE Summit, and a Summit is planned for next year. Let me add, however, that the content of this document is much more important than meeting a deadline, or deciding on a venue to be honoured by its adoption there. We want thorough discussions with all OSCE participating States on all aspects of this document, so that it can be the milestone in European history that we wish it to be.

There is a need for an updated document reflecting the altered state of affairs since the adoption by Heads of State or Government of the Charter of Paris for a New Europe at the Paris Summit in November 1990. That was the milestone at the end of the Cold War. But European security architecture has changed profoundly over the last ten years, and the OSCE has received a more prominent role in the design. During this period we have witnessed war and regional instability, and armed conflict is unfortunately still a real threat to the lives of many Europeans. But these threats to security have not been countered by the traditional means of security policy, as we know them from

the Cold War. Deterrence and military preparedness on a large scale are obviously not the only answer. All our security-related organizations have adapted to the new challenges, and fulfil different roles. The OSCE has carved out its role. Neither the OSCE nor NATO, the WEU or any other international organization, has a superior or co-ordinating role to play. The establishment of some kind of European security council or superior decision-making body in any of these organizations would be counterproductive. Nor would it reflect the indivisibility of European security. The political document in question should thus provide for flexible co-operation between democratic security organizations. The inclusiveness of the OSCE gives it a central role, and its human dimension *acquis* is a corner-stone for all these organizations. None of these organizations, however, should have a role that is superior to that of other international organizations.

Norway's task as OSCE Chairman-in-Office for 1999 and our priorities for this office are based on this assumption. The task is a major administrative and political one for Norway, and requires substantial resources, but it is also a major opportunity for us to be a key contributor on a broad range of issues relating to security, human rights and democracy. The OSCE differs from other international organizations, among other things, in that it is led by its Chairman-in-Office, and not by a Secretary General. This arrangement provides maximum political involvement and momentum from the leadership. It also gives the Organization a different character from that of comparable international organizations. Flexibility, ingenuity and adaptability are hallmarks of the OSCE.

Norway is willing to take on this task because we are willing to bear our share of the responsibility for security and stability in Europe. We have invested much in the OSCE, politically, economically, and in terms of personnel. It is in our interests to follow up this involvement. We also have a good reputation in international crisis prevention and crisis management. We should build on our experiences in this field and do our part of the job here on our own continent. We have also taken on this task as a natural extension of our commitment to NATO and to European security in general. Last, but not least, the OSCE chairmanship is a reminder that Norway's foreign policy is one of continued commitment and active involvement in all parts of European security with a view to promoting peace and stability. This is what makes us look forward to 1999 with high expectations, but also with respect for the task that has been entrusted to us by the participating States.

One of our main objectives for the chairmanship is to make the Organization better suited for its operational tasks. In practical terms, this means that some priority will have to be given to the Organization itself. The OSCE is different from most other international bodies, in that it is not treaty based. It is founded on its political commitments, and is a lean and very cost-effective

organization. This aspect should not be changed, as it contributes to the effectiveness of the Organization. We must, however, continue our efforts to put in place a sound financial basis for the manifold activities of the OSCE. Political preparedness for unforeseen emergencies will not suffice unless it is accompanied by financial preparedness. Much has been achieved through the establishment of the OSCE Contingency Fund last year, on our initiative, and through the decision at the Copenhagen Ministerial Meeting on a new scale of distribution for large-scale OSCE missions and projects. The latter, which was accomplished thanks among other things to Danish diplomacy, is a major step in the right direction. Much, however, remains to be done, and we intend to do our part.

A much-needed reform of the OSCE Secretariat is under way. It is a lean secretariat, and should remain so. This task should be the first step in the direction of building new OSCE capacity and capabilities, such as police training and monitoring, and streamlining existing capabilities, primarily the OSCE field missions. One important priority will be improved recruitment and training of mission members. We have a moral obligation to ensure that individuals serving the OSCE, frequently under very difficult circumstances, are as well prepared as possible for the challenges they will be facing. Another factor is that the OSCE is a young organization, and might need to establish its own *esprit de corps*. I expect this to be a positive side effect of improved training. The OSCE should, in sum, hone its own tools in order to become a more effective instrument for the early warning of potential conflict, conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation.

We cannot possibly know much about what emergencies will have arisen six months from now, so that it will be up to Norwegian diplomacy to deal with them. It is a safe bet, however, that things can happen fast and unexpectedly, and that there will be difficult situations to handle on behalf of the participating States. We must expect the unexpected, but can safely predict that the OSCE will have major commitments throughout the Balkans, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and Albania, as well as in several parts of Eastern Europe, including Belarus and Ukraine.

It will be our duty to take the initiative and lead the way in all these cases, but only with the backing of the participating States, and above all, of the parties involved. The OSCE is a consensus-based organization, and should remain so. This is perhaps its most important asset. Thus the Chairman-in-Office cannot act without support and approval. I am sure that Norwegian diplomacy has much to contribute, but we are primarily obliged to take into account the interests of participating States, and to work out viable compromises. 1999 will accordingly not be the time to pursue parochial Norwegian interests.

This government is emphasizing the importance of moral values in all aspects of politics, a principle which fits in well with the values behind OSCE conflict prevention. Consider the case of Belarus. In the last few years the OSCE has paid increasing attention to the negative developments there, with their massive violations of OSCE commitments. The constitutional crisis and increasing repression are a tragedy for the people of Belarus. The situation is, moreover, a threat to stability and security in the whole region. The early warning functions of the OSCE were triggered at an early stage, and we are now at the crisis prevention stage. The OSCE has set up its Advisory and Monitoring Group in Minsk. The aim is to work both with the authorities and with non-governmental organizations in order to bring the country a step forward on the road to democracy and the rule of law. It will not be easy, but I think it is possible to help Belarus find its way to democracy.

The crisis management function is perhaps even more demanding than crisis prevention. We try through the OSCE to manage crises while they are still at low intensity, to curb them and to offer remedies. Looking back on the crisis one and a half years ago in Albania, it seems fair to say that the OSCE handled it in a reasonably effective manner, thanks again largely to our Danish friends' chairmanship. Foreign Minister Niels Helveg Petersen appointed the former Chancellor of Austria, Dr Franz Vranitzky, as his Personal Representative to Albania, and Dr Vranitzky handled the co-ordination of international efforts with great skill. The immediate danger of total breakdown and chaos is over, and post-conflict rehabilitation is well under way. The job in Albania is not finished yet, of course, and it is really up to the Albanian leaders to take steps towards reconciliation. The international community cannot normally take a hands-on approach as was done in the elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The normal tasks of the OSCE are monitoring and advising on the one hand and more direct approaches like political pressure and the offering of good offices on the other. And this is what we have done in Albania.

At this juncture, it is appropriate to mention the crisis in Kosovo, as it appears to be growing increasingly serious. The Belgrade leadership has delivered too little too late to avoid a further escalation of the conflict, not only by Yugoslavian forces, but also by the Albanian majority in Kosovo. Kosovo has thus become a conflict of higher intensity, and should be dealt with by the OSCE in concert with other security organizations with other tools. In the short term, the hostilities should be curbed, so that we can get back on the right political track.

Milošević should accept Felipe González as the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for Yugoslavia, with a mandate including Kosovo. We have also asked that the OSCE Mission of Long Duration return to Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina, in order to monitor the situation. The

Yugoslavs do not appear in principle to have problems in accepting an OSCE presence in the country. The problem, however, is that they want to be reinstated in the OSCE as full participants before accepting an OSCE mission. This is a Gordian knot, as the issue is connected to the question of succession to the Former Yugoslavia. So far we have not been able to untie this knot.

Hopefully we will be able to start up our fieldwork in Yugoslavia soon. The OSCE will then have important tasks to carry out in democratizing not only Kosovo, but all of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

There is enough potential for conflict in the OSCE area to keep us awake at night. It will always be cheaper, in this and other cases, for the international community, and even more so for the societies under pressure, if we are able to do something about the root causes of the conflicts in question. Armed conflicts are the most tragic and costly undertakings imaginable. Peacekeeping and other operations that very often follow peace settlements cost a lot of money too, but are of course worth the cost. An OSCE mission with anything from a handful to a couple of hundred mission members is a low cost affair. The cost-effectiveness of OSCE field operations compares favourably with that of most other international organizations. We have seen that the fieldwork done by the OSCE missions gives results. If, through fieldwork and other instruments at our disposal, we can get all OSCE States to pay respect to human rights, including the rights of ethnic minorities, and to the principles of democracy, there will be less reason to fear armed conflict and instability. We will then have managed to remove most of the causes of war.

The work we do in Bosnia and Herzegovina is perhaps the best example of how conflict prevention can be achieved by dealing with the root causes of the conflict. The political development in the Serbian half of the country, Republika Srpska, has also demonstrated that free elections in themselves can help us along the path towards reconciliation and peace.

The Dayton Agreement gave the OSCE the task of building democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and of regional arms control in and around Bosnia and Herzegovina. Arms control has been a success so far, but the existence of armaments is only the symptom of the conflict. Arms do not cause war by their mere existence.

More important is the ethnic hatred and the previous lack of democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since the signing of the Dayton Agreement, the OSCE has taken a hands-on approach in building up democratic structures in the country. Most important have been the elections at all levels that have been conducted by the OSCE in the past years. In September 1998 there will be another set of elections, from the level of president down to cantonal level. It is an open question how long the OSCE should continue its hands-on approach with regard to democracy-building in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but I am convinced that the post-conflict rehabilitation so far has contributed to a

sense of normality. We expect the 1998 elections to be the last to be actually conducted by the international community, and that the Bosnians themselves will gradually take over this and other functions. The OSCE has laid down the rules of democracy, and sooner or later the country will have to function by itself, without our direct involvement. As important as the elections themselves is the OSCE democratization programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina, which goes beyond elections. It has been, and still is, important to break down the dominance of the ethnically based political parties, and it is important to train young politicians, local community leaders and others in grass-roots democracy.

One of the most difficult part of our work in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the return of refugees. We still have a long way to go before refugees feel comfortable about returning to their homes in large numbers. However, the return of refugees is one of the prerequisites for lasting peace, not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but in all parts of the former Yugoslavia.

We must not forget that the building of democracy is a long-term process, and changing cultural values and social structures may take many years. This, of course, is not something OSCE can do by itself. Close co-ordination is needed between the many international organizations and agencies engaged at all levels in the Bosnian peace process. Positive steps have been taken towards building a sustainable democracy, but much needs to be done. Neither Bosnian authorities nor the Bosnian people should doubt our resolve or our common goal: a unitary, multi-ethnic and democratic Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I believe that the post-conflict rehabilitation of Bosnia and Herzegovina will prove that such work is simply another side of the work being done elsewhere in the OSCE area, namely crisis prevention. It is by securing respect for ethnic minorities, the rule of law and democracy, that a society can remain stable. We are not achieving all we want in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but we are achieving a lot. Time will show whether we achieve enough, but I am fairly optimistic.