

In Lieu of a Foreword: Countering the Paradoxes of European Security!

1999 has been a year of jubilees: big and important ones like the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty; and slightly smaller ones like the publication of this book - the fifth volume of the OSCE Year-book series founded in 1995.

But 1999 was also and notably the year of the Kosovo war. For a period of almost a decade Kosovo Albanians had drawn scarcely any attention from the European community of peoples. It was only when Kosovo Albanian resistance changed from being non-violent into an armed struggle, only when freedom fighters changed into terrorists, only when the Serbs began to massacre Albanian civilians, only when Albanian nationalists threatened to involve all of the Balkans in a war for the sake of a Greater Albania - only then did Europe awaken from its lethargy and force the Serbs and Kosovo Albanians to come to the negotiating table at Rambouillet. Too late! The carriage changes into a pumpkin at five past twelve with no room left for crisis prevention. Especially when indispensable structures, mechanisms, financial resources and people are not available to provide effective and successful prevention, and/or they must first be located and organized. As a consequence, the Holbrooke-Milošević Agreement of October 1998 failed - among other things, because the promised 2,000 OSCE verifiers had not been held in reserve within the present European security system and were not located rapidly enough during the autumn of 1998. Furthermore the "protectorate" that NATO established after the war has been unable, up to now, to prevent displacement, plundering and murder, quite simply because the required 3,000 (international) policemen are not available. They, too, have not been provided for in the present European security system and during the war no one belonging to the planning and leadership of the warring parties hit upon the idea of locating and instituting the appropriate international police force in time - i.e. as a preventive measure.

As the example of Kosovo again demonstrates, the present European security system is characterized by a number of paradoxes and contradictions. Among these paradoxes is the loudly proclaimed commitment of all political forces to civil crisis prevention while at the same time the European community of states continues to display ignorance and passivity in the face of recognizable or even already escalating conflict potential. The present European security system does no more than pay lip service to the maxim that "prevention is better than treatment".

Military prevention is another matter, however. It, too, belongs to the grand paradoxes of the present European security system - if for opposite reasons.

There is a widespread public view that the past decade, following the end of the East-West conflict, has been a "decade of disarmament" and that the NATO countries have reduced their armaments on an unprecedented - indeed disproportionate - scale. But this view is a dangerous misconception. On the contrary, the military expenses of the United States and of the European NATO countries are still at a level of 270 billion US-Dollars and 180 billion US-Dollars respectively. Thus NATO spends ten to twenty times what Russia does. Moreover: the nineteen member countries of NATO alone expend the gigantic sum of 450 billion US-Dollars, which accounts for over five eighths of the armaments expenditures of the approximately 190 countries in the world. Even so, the colossal NATO military complex was unable to deter Serbia from oppressing the Kosovo Albanians. And the longer the war lasted, the more obvious it became that even its giant war machinery was unable to achieve the promoted goal of preventing a "humanitarian catastrophe".

Finally, yet another paradox of our present security system lies in the fact that in the years 1989/90 we had the chance of the century to create a stable and lasting order for peace and security in and for Europe. If the historic chance offered by the 1989/90 turning point is not to be squandered, the security system in and for Europe that we now have must be upended. To repeat: the NATO military alliance accounts for more than five eighths of all military expenses in the world. Nevertheless, it is unable to prevent genocide and war in Europe. What Europe urgently needs is to strengthen the OSCE, i.e. its development into a regional system of collective security as intended by Article 24 of German Basic Law and which is also provided for in the UN Charter as a regional arrangement. The European security order would then rest on a legal system in which, in the case that order must be reinstated, no further mandate would be required - it would possess sufficient and efficient instruments for crisis prevention and for the peaceful and civil settlement of disputes ("the aggressor in an armed conflict is the one who refuses arbitration"), it would be able to pursue aggressors and war criminals and bring them before a court, and it would possess (in co-operation with NATO and the WEU) means of military coercion which as the *ultima ratio* would not throw the gates wide open for arbitrary political action but would follow a system of law and order and, perhaps, restore it.