

Confidential

RUSSIA

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Evgeny Buzhinsky reports from Moscow:

THE ROLE OF THE OSCE IN INTERNATIONAL SECURITY:

OPPORTUNITIES NOT EXHAUSTED

ANNOTATION

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has made a lot of progress over the past 20 years in harmonizing the interests of its member states - but there have also been many failures along the way. The organization is focusing primarily on humanitarian issues, almost entirely ignoring far more serious and pressing security problems on the European continent. It is often claimed that the biggest achievement made over the past two decades is the reduction of the likelihood of a major war between countries and alliances to almost zero - but events in former Yugoslavia, South Ossetia, and especially Ukraine cast serious doubts on such a claim.

The vast majority of the OSCE member states also participate in various other integration projects, both economic (EU, Eurasian Economic Union, SCO) and military-political (NATO, CSTO), further deepening their interdependence. Evgeny Buzhinsky, Chairman of the PIR Center Executive Board, says there is every reason to believe that the OSCE still has plenty of untapped potential to harmonize the security integration processes in the Euroatlantic and Eurasian spaces.

In this issue of Russia Confidential, Buzhinsky analyses the possibility of the OSCE once again becoming a platform for real security cooperation. He outlines the existing systemic problems facing the organization, and offers practical recommendations on establishing an effective system of comprehensive security in the Euroatlantic and Eurasian spaces.

SYSTEMIC CRISIS IN THE OSCE

Even though the OSCE is regarded as one of the main organizations for the prevention and peaceful resolution of crises and conflicts in its area of responsibility, 20 years on since the end of the Cold War it has yet to become a generally recognized forum for equal and mutually respectful dialogue on security issues. The organization is going through a long period of systemic crisis.

The first sign of that crisis was the OSCE's inability to respond effectively to the war in Yugoslavia in 1999, the war that has led to a unilateral declaration of independence by Kosovo. Then came the armed conflict in South Ossetia in 2008, and the coup d'état followed by civil war in Ukraine in 2014.

Such failures are largely the result of the OSCE's continued inability to become a proper international organization (formally, it still remains a *regional agreement*). The process of its institutionalization also remains incomplete; the OSCE does not have a Charter, which is the foundation of the work of any intergovernmental organization.

As a result, the OSCE is slowly but surely losing its reputation and political standing in the system of international relations, especially against the backdrop of other integration processes in the Euroatlantic and Eurasian spaces, such as the EU, NATO, CSTO, SCO, and the EEU.

There was a real chance for a revival of the OSCE at the Organization's summit in Kazakhstan on December 1-2, 2010, during which the parties adopted the Astana Declaration headlined "Towards a Security Community". That declaration outlined the goal of establishing a security space free of any division lines or zones with different levels of security. The key provisions of that declaration were in line with the Russian initiative on negotiating a European Security Treaty, which was essentially rejected by the West. The Western capitals argued that there was no need for developing new mechanisms, let alone a new legal framework, of European security because the existing organizations (NATO, the EU, and the OSCE) were adequate to the task at hand. But the OSCE is essentially focusing only on the humanitarian aspects of security. As for NATO and the EU, their work does not involve Russia, which is a major security actor. It is therefore unsurprising that no progress has been made in implementing the Astana Declaration. Moreover, after the 2014 coup d'état in Ukraine, Crimea's reunification with Russia, and the outbreak of civil war between the central government in Kiev and the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics, there are now preconditions in Europe for the emergence of a clear division line between Russia and the NATO members, who make up more than half of the OSCE member states.

POTENTIAL FOR THE OSCE'S REVIVAL AS A FORUM FOR REAL POLITICAL DIALOGUE

To address this situation, there must be a demonstration of collective political will to adapt the OSCE to the new geopolitical situation. For example, it is obvious that there can be no military solution to the confrontation between Kiev and the Southeast of Ukraine. Attempts by the Ukrainian leadership to subjugate the mutinous provinces could trigger an armed conflict that involves other states. That could lead to unpredictable consequences for Europe and for global security in general. The only possible solution is political.

OSCE -

an intergovernmental regional political body that includes 56 member states (all the European countries, the United States, Canada, and states in Central Asia and the Trans-Caucasus). Another 12 countries are OSCE Cooperation Partners: six in the Mediterranean (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia), and six in Asia (Afghanistan, Australia, Japan, Mongolia, South Korea, and Thailand).

OSCE is the successor of the so-called Helsinki Process, the Council for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) that was convened in various formats starting from 1975, and was transformed into the OSCE in 1995.

It is hard to predict the shape of any future political compromise for Ukraine. Nevertheless, during the "post-Ukrainian period", the OSCE has a good chance of becoming the platform that will facilitate the establishment of a European security system that reflects the modern geopolitical situation. The OSCE fits that role because of its universality and membership.

There are several possible options: the same outcome could be achieved in the framework of the Helsinki+ Process or some other process. The main thing is that there are **strong reasons** for the OSCE to be revived as a proper security cooperation organization.

First, the vast majority of the OSCE members, with the exception of a small group of Asian states, identify themselves as *Europeans*, with shared historical and cultural roots, and centuries of economic, political, and cultural ties.

Second, the Euroatlantic and Eurasian security spaces have the same principles and, on the whole, a shared set of values. In 1975, the countries that gathered in Helsinki undertook commitments to abide by the agreed set of principles in the area of security. They reiterated those commitments during the summit in Astana in 2010.

Third, in the 21st century all OSCE member states are facing new challenges and threats, including transnational and even global ones, such as cybersecurity threats, climate change, transnational terrorism, and drug trafficking. Identifying coordinated solutions to these challenges could be a factor of convergence of the member states' interests.

Fourth, the population of this planet is expected to reach 8bn people by 2025. The OSCE member states can substantially increase their competitiveness in a globalized world by expanding and deepening their economic, technological, and scientific cooperation, especially given the interdependent and mutually complementary nature of their economies.

Fifth, technological leadership, strong institutions, high governance standards, a sophisticated judiciary system, and transparency in all areas can make the European and Eurasian security spaces an example to be emulated by the rest of the world.

SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS IN OSCE SPACE

The new model of the security system in the OSCE region will not have to be built from scratch. Over the past 20 years the organization has made a lot of progress in harmonizing the interests of its member states. Nevertheless, a whole host of systemic problems has piled up over those years.

- New division lines have emerged in the OSCE space in recent years. The degree of mutual mistrust is growing at an alarming rate. In most cases, the prevailing mode is that of a *zero-sum game*, with greater security for some being achieved at the expense of lesser security for others. Many issues on the economic agenda, such as the exploration of new mineral resources or labor migration, are clearly being politicized. Some efforts have been undertaken in recent years to address these imbalances, including the Corfu Process (a series of informal consultations involving OSCE, CIS, NATO, EU, and OSCE representatives) - but these efforts have failed.

- The differences in approaches to some specific problems between individual countries are often compounded by their different worldviews. The prevailing notion in the West is that the *non-cooperative* foreign policy of the former Soviet states is the result of their lack of democracy and constant violations of human rights. The former Soviet states, meanwhile, believe that the West has failed to get rid of the geopolitical ambitions, thinking, and rhetoric that date back to the Cold War era.

- Almost every international organization in the Euroatlantic and Eurasian spaces is facing major challenges. The consequences of the ill-thought-out EU enlargement policy

and of the recent financial and economic crisis are compounded by the effects of the European sanctions against Russia and Russia's own retaliatory sanctions. As a result of these sanctions, the Europeans are losing the Russian market. Meanwhile, the crisis in Ukraine has finally given NATO a new reason for being (although the organization has had to once again designate Russia as the main external threat). The OSCE is in the throes of a systemic crisis, and has essentially become the weakest link in the system of international institutions. The CSTO and the EEU are also facing difficulties characteristic of any new institution whose organizational structure is still evolving.

- There are several frozen conflicts in the OSCE space that still remain unresolved. Those conflicts have emerged largely because the warring factions lack the political will to search for a compromise. In most situations, the irony is that after months, years, and decades, the compromises being offered to the so-called *separatists* essentially represent what those separatists had been calling for all along. But after numerous casualties, and after years of de facto independence, the leaders of the unrecognized and recognized states are no longer able to accept those compromises.

- The situation with arms control and confidence-building measures remains in a deadlock. The 1990 Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, which used to be "the cornerstone of European security", has turned into a stumbling block. Attempts at adapting the Vienna Document to the modern realities in terms of confidence-building measures have all but failed. The Open Skies Treaty is still working more or less as it should, even though it, too, is often becoming hostage to political differences between its members. The situation is compounded by the emergence of new problems in the European continent, such as the deployment of the European segment of America's missile defense system, and the development of new high-precision weapons systems.

ESTABLISHING A COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY SYSTEM IN THE OSCE SPACE: RECOMMENDATIONS

First. Even very deep economic interdependence does not automatically guarantee peace and stability. In fact, asymmetric interdependence can even lead to conflicts. Concrete political steps are needed, using all the instruments available to governments.

Second. Progress towards establishing a reliable and sustainable security system can only be made if interests of all OSCE members are taken into account. Such progress will also require expansion of the areas of mutual interest, and cooperation between governmental and public institutions.

Third. The OSCE should include as many problems as possible in its purview. It is necessary to develop a system of agreements, treaties, and legally and politically binding regimes in the OSCE framework. The more substantial the network of mutual commitments, the more difficult it will be for member states to resort to weapons in order to resolve international or domestic problems.

Fourth. It is necessary to maintain a balance between the old agenda inherited from the Cold War period (arms control, stronger security confidence-building measures) and the new agenda that encompasses modern transnational challenges (terrorism, cybercrime, and drug trafficking). Nevertheless, the new agenda should gradually come to the fore.

Five. It is also necessary to keep track of such complex issues as the deployment of the European segment of America's global missile defense system, and the ongoing deadlock in conventional arms control.

The impasse with the implementation of the CFE Treaty following Russia's suspension of its compliance with the treaty requires radical solutions about the future of the CFE. Clearly, the treaty in its original form has lost its relevance, and Russia has no intention of going back to it. To make things perfectly clear, the Russian leadership should officially withdraw from the treaty in accordance with the established

procedure. The Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty, which has yet to be ratified by the NATO countries, is no longer relevant, either. It can hardly serve as a basis for further dialogue on arms control. We need either to negotiate a new treaty or to abandon legally binding arms control instruments in favor of a system of confidence-building measures and closer bilateral and multilateral military cooperation.

Negotiating a new treaty would be problematic in the current circumstances because the Russian approach requires a radical revision of the existing system of limitations, and the inclusion of new weapons categories in that system (such as UAVs and carrier-based aircraft). The NATO countries would hardly be prepared to go along with such a change. On the other hand, NATO's approach could be more flexible if the new weapons categories were to become a subject of monitoring rather than limitations. The most realistic approach to the so-called hard security situation would be to augment the existing system of security confidence-building measures - by adapting the Vienna Document to modern realities, to begin with.

There are now about 20 proposals on adapting the Vienna Document on the negotiating table. These proposals concern five sections of the 2011 Vienna Document, which is currently in force.

- First of all, it is clearly necessary to lower the threshold of military activity subject to notification and observation (Sections V and VI). In other words, the thresholds for the number of personnel, weapons, and hardware must be reduced.
- The number of units used for the calculation of quotas for assessment visits must also be reduced.
- Another change to consider is increasing the duration of visits and the number of inspectors. The same applies to the number of inspections under Article VI, with an increase in the duration of inspections and in the number of inspectors.
- Finally, taking into account the experience of all military conflicts over the past 20 years, real predictability and transparency cannot be provided without the naval forces fully being included in the scope of the existing confidence-building measures (not necessarily in the framework of the Vienna Document). That implies not only exchanging information about the composition of the Navies, but also an appropriate system of notifications.

Sixth. Building an effective security system absolutely requires the involvement of all the political and social-economic institutions of the states involved in that effort. That includes not only competent non-governmental organizations but also representatives of the big business, trade unions, and the church. Obviously, such a broadly representative approach will help to foster a new culture of peaceful conflict settlement.

Seventh. The OSCE is the most representative organization in the Euroatlantic and Eurasian spaces. As a regional organization in the definition of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE must continue to play an important role as an instrument of providing comprehensive security in its area of responsibility. To achieve tangible results in the provision of security, the OSCE must cooperate more actively not only with the EU and NATO, but also with the CSTO, the CIS, and the EEU.

Eighth. It is necessary to return to the issue of institutional strengthening of the OSCE, adopt a Charter of that organization, and broaden the functions and remit of its secretary-general (especially in conflict prevention, conflict settlement, and post-conflict rehabilitation).

Obviously, at this time, with the crisis in Ukraine still raging, and amid a sharp deterioration of relations between Russia and the West, these recommendations may seem removed from reality, and impossible to implement in the foreseeable future. But unless the OSCE member states try to address the security problems that have emerged in recent years, and attempt to find new approaches, the OSCE's potential will remain severely limited.

The author of this paper is Lt. Gen. (rtd) Evgeny Buzhinsky, Chairman of the PIR Center Executive Board. In 2002-2009 Gen. Buzhinsky served as head of Department for International Agreements and deputy head of the Main Department for International Military Cooperation at the Russian MoD.

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Dmitry Polikanov