

My vision for the OSCE in a 40-year perspective: focus on good governance and anticorruption. Globalisation is irrevocable

- speaking notes for an intervention in the Swedish Parliament 2015-03-11

(OSCE Parliamentary seminar organised by the Swedish institute for International Affairs on behalf on the Swedish Parliament and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in view of the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act).

A political message that can constitute a carrying idea for the OSCE, beyond the current crisis, is to focus on human development with a much stronger political emphasis on the need for good governance and anticorruption in all three baskets of the OSCE - in support of an irrevocable globalisation.

The need for a cross-dimensional perspective on security in the OSCE context must be analysed over time. The world is not the same as in 1975.

I will try to see this detached from my professional perspective as a Swedish and later EU diplomatic representative over many years, starting in the second half of 1983. I am now a proud member of the Swedish OSCE NGO network.

And what I assume that we are talking about here is - in the end - the added value of the OSCE and in my intervention I will focus on the soft power of the OSCE concepts.

The first approach, which was included in the name of the CSCE as a conference, was of course the combination of the two concepts of security and cooperation.

These two notions were operationalized into three baskets relating to security in the politico-military dimension, economic and environmental cooperation and, importantly, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The discourse at the time was initially one between states, focusing on central issues after the Second World War, notably security. It was widely assumed that this was primarily an Eastern interest relating to recognition of borders after the Second World War.

But when the Helsinki Final act was published in its entirety in 20 million copies in Pravda and Izvestia in the summer of 1975 something happened. Attention turned not only in the United States and Western Europe but also in several countries members of the Warsaw Pact to a third concept beyond security and co-operation, freedom.

The Helsinki Final Act explicitly inspired future leaders such as Nobel Peace Prize laureate Lech Walesa to embark on the road to Gdansk already from 1976. In early January of the following year Vaclav Havel and 242 other brave people in Czechoslovakia signed Charta 77.

In this process the soft power contribution of the CSCE commitments turned out to be historic. The worries that the CSCE process would conserve an unhealthy status quo, as discussed in the US congressional hearings at the time, turned out to be unwarranted.

In fact the CSCE approach to security in reality preceded by decades the development of a comprehensive approach to security in other regional and global settings.

It sparked not only intellectual interest but mobilised emotional intelligence in many parts of Europe.

In contrast to the development on the NGO level, the interstate discourse grew more and more infected over the years throughout the Polish crisis culminating at the Madrid follow-up meeting in 1983. At that point very little

was going on in terms of negotiations between East and West even on the nuclear level.

The fact that consensus could be reached on organising here in Stockholm a conference on confidence and security building measures and disarmament (opened in January 1984 by the late Prime Minister Olof Palme) may be hard to understand from this perspective. Most people who had been engaged in the negotiations in and around Madrid were thoroughly pessimistic. But there were a few optimists in the West hoping to create more transparency through CSBMs provided that they were militarily significant and verifiable. This meant that East and West could agree on moving ahead in the first politico-military basket while maintaining fundamentally different interpretations of what should be agreed, with the Warsaw Pact focusing on non-first use of nuclear weapons. We all know what happened: on-site inspection of conventional military activities was agreed for the first time here in Stockholm.

This mobilised political energy in the negotiations leading not only to large scale disarmament in Europe but also to a valuable code of conduct in the politico-military sphere focussing on the honour of the military profession.

The notion that cooperation but also freedom, predictability and transparency are integral parts of the concept of security has of course been hard to accept for many political leaders both then and now.

And in particular of course the introduction of the concept of democracy into the Paris Charter in 1990 has been very problematic. As a defensive measure the argument has been introduced that democracy is to be adapted to the local conditions at hand.

Even more problematic for those who were not present at the CSCE historic events in Paris and in Moscow in 1990 is of course the notion expressed in the Moscow mechanism that human rights is not an issue of internal affairs of states.

What we now see is a breakdown of many hard-fought and established processes in the framework of the OSCE, including arms control. The Astana Summit in 2010 achieved total reaffirmation of the OSCE body of commitments. But this fact is seldom referred to: the soft power of this reaffirmation has been very limited, to say the least.

Serious violations of these commitments took place already weeks after the summit. And I need not dwell on what happened since.

So we need again to reflect on what is the added value of the OSCE in conceptual terms? What conceptual soft power can be mobilised to promote security and co-operation in the Euro Atlantic and Eurasian space? It is clear that simple slogans will not help. Calls for cooperation through engagement are countered by calls for isolation. Calls for cooperative security are countered by calls for deterring aggression. The notion of a security community in the Euro Atlantic setting or in a Eurasian perspective has not, unfortunately, mobilised real political attention.

Some would even argue that the OSCE needs to take a break beyond its monitoring role in the Ukraine until the current situation has been resolved.

This would however assume that people in general do not seriously reflect on their increasingly difficult situation. Empirical evidence not only from the Arab Spring but also inside the OSCE area, both in the south and in the East, contradicts this assumption, already during the financial crisis.

In order to analyse this issue there is a need to introduce two additional concepts into the equation. The first one is globalisation, which has accelerated enormously and irrevocably after the end of the Cultural Revolution in China and the rise of Asia. The high-level panel on the millennium development goals is clear about the global development. Since the 70s billions of people have been brought out of poverty. The condition of

this evolution has to a large extent been education. An education in a globalising world means freedom to interact and freedom to move.

But globalisation puts all societies under pressure to perform and subjects all countries increasingly to both new threats and opportunities. Good and bad flows are increasingly and organically interwoven, affecting countries previously rather isolated from the international community. And globalisation promotes urbanisation, which makes it difficult for many countries to feed their own populations. They need something to export and they need stable prices. They cannot count on such stability only on the basis of the export of raw materials as illustrated by the volatility of the oil price not only now but also at the end of the Cold War.

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The sad truth is of course that large segments of the populations in the OSCE region have not yet experienced significantly improved living conditions after the end of the Cold War, despite globalisation. In some countries of the OSCE region, including Russia, life expectancy is now lower than in China. And for the women who live longer than the men life is particularly troublesome adding on to the hardships relating to the combined effects of poverty and transnational threats, trafficking etc throughout their life.

When at some point the attention of people in general turns away from the television set to the evermore-empty refrigerator they will ask why. We now know what they in many cases define as an overarching problem is lack of good governance and rampant corruption. To a certain extent this is not a manifestation of a clash of civilisations.

Development did not follow automatically after the opening of the borders, symbolised by the fall of the Berlin Wall. The graphs showing human development in the OSCE space are very different comparing the

evolution in countries such as Poland with the evolution in countries such as Ukraine.

This has brought enormous disappointment to many, not least in the Eastern and Southern parts of the OSCE space. Something has been missing which has destabilised many societies, also inside the European Union namely good governance and the rule of law. What we have seen in the last decades in Europe is an increased unrest in large segments of underprivileged people as a response to mismanagement and corruption.

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So what then can the OSCE do in order to promote good governance and the rule of law in order to manage the process of globalisation inside and between societies?

Good governance is not an issue of any one basket in the OSCE. As a discourse it has developed after the end of the Cold War. It has become a central part of the security discourse, notably security sector reform and the democratic control over armed Forces. In the second basket the need for investment protection and the rule of law for business has become a central problem not least in the context of the financial crisis. And in the third basket protection of journalists and freedom of the media, the security of the Internet, including the respect for the integrity of the individual and intellectual property are major issues related to good governance. And of course overall the respect for international law and for the body of commitments undertaken in the OSCE and reaffirmed as late as at the Astana Summit in 2010 is the fundamental issue.

In my view therefore the search for a political message that can mobilise soft power needs to focus on human development and human security with a much stronger political emphasis on the need for good governance. In my view parliamentarians can play a crucial role to bring forward this message in combination with the message that globalisation is a irrevocable and is that to reduce freedom or to divert attention from these problems is not a viable solution.

It is now crucial to avoid reversing the trend of globalisation and undo the work done by countless people in support of the CSCE/OSCE process over many decades.

So globalisation requires good governance. And globalisation requires integration in all directions.