

TURKISH DELEGATION TO THE OSCE

2003 MEDITERRANEAN SEMINAR ON THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO SECURITY: THE OSCE EXPERIENCE AND ITS RELEVANCE FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

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KEYNOTE STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ÖMÜR ORHUN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY TO THE OSCE,
ON “THE SECURITY DIMENSION: CONFLICT PREVENTION AND CONFIDENCE-BUILDING”

Introduction

It is evident that today we are living in a world that is much different from the 20th Century. The risks, challenges and threats faced by humanity, the means of collective and individual response to repel them and the conception of inter- state relations have evolved considerably.

In her lead-in article to the SIPRI 2003 Yearbook, Director of SIPRI Ms. Alyson Bailes observes that the co-dependance of might and right has come back to the centre of world debate. In that respect, a shared commitment to embrace cooperative security seems to be the key for stability and progress.

Applying the lessons learned from the CSCE/OSCE experience to other areas

Recently a number of non-governmental circles and even some official representatives have dwelled on the necessity of applying the lessons learned from the CSCE/OSCE experience to other areas. As a first step in this direction, Afghanistan has been included among OSCE Partners for Cooperation to facilitate collaboration and cooperation with the OSCE member states and especially those bordering Afghanistan. It was thought that the OSCE experience in institution building could be usefully employed in this country, although delivery systems would be needed.

Others have suggested that a similar model could be employed in the greater Middle East region, taking the Mediterranean Partnership for Cooperation as a starting point.

A Model for the Middle East based on the OSCE Experience

Let me try to expand on the idea of creating a model for the Middle East based on the OSCE experience.

Non-governmental and academic circles based in the West have recently undertaken some brain-storming exercises on this subject, in the aftermath of the Iraqi operation and in view of searches for an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal.

Defenders of one school of thought are advocating expansion of the OSCE to include the greater Middle Eastern region, possibly starting with the enlargement of the Mediterranean Partnership for Cooperation scheme. Others favour preparation and adoption of a Middle East Regional Security Charter, more or less based on the OSCE model. In both cases, the norms and principles of the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act, together with subsequent OSCE acquis, are proposed to be applied also in the Middle East, through appropriate mechanisms.

I should add that these norms and principles pertain both to establishment of peace, security and stability, as well as to conduct of inter-state relations.

On the other hand, we also notice a growing number of authoritative statements underlining the need to look to the Middle East beyond the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, within the perspective of enhancement of democracy, human rights and rule of law and in response to the legitimate security requirements of the region.

Past experience

At this stage, let me immediately recall that such initiatives are not totally new. For example, during 1994-95 and within the Madrid Peace Process, the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group had undertaken under the mentorship of Turkey positive discussions on prior notification of certain military activities and military information exchanges.

Before attempting to analyze these initiatives, I must stress that every region has its own particular conditions and that while it would be a good idea to benefit from the experience of others, the specific security requirements of different regions need to be fully taken into account to reach viable security and confidence building measures.

I will not attempt to draw a historical sketch of the evolution of the Mediterranean Partnership for Cooperation mechanism. Let me only state that I find this dialogue and coordination most useful and that I furthermore believe the OSCE experience can usefully serve the needs of the larger Middle Eastern region. But how?

Way-Ahead

We can start with the impracticability of expansion of the OSCE, at least for the time being. Therefore, we must search for other means. As a first step, enlargement of the Mediterranean Partnership for Cooperation to those Mediterranean countries who are willing and able can be contemplated. Why not start with Syria, if this country is willing to join?

As a second or even concurrent step, we can contemplate establishing partnership arrangements with other willing Middle Eastern countries, never closing the door to those who may not be initially interested.

We can and must also try to enhance the modalities of partnership, be it in its present form or in any possible expanded form. How can we achieve this?

First, a need towards change, a growing awareness and call for reform is evident in the Middle East. There are also many positive steps taken. It is becoming increasingly apparent that progress depends on political, economic and social factors. Gradual steps towards more representative and accountable structures are taken. These need to be supported and the OSCE can, if asked, contribute to this process.

The Foreign Minister of Turkey, Mr. Gül, at the World Economic Forum held at the Dead Sea/Jordan in June 2003 elaborated on our perspectives in this direction. (His statement will be made available to participants to this seminar.) As Mr. Gül also underlined, the key concepts in this field are; full respect for the rule of law, effective functioning of the judiciary, transparency of the state

structures, respect for human rights and freedoms, political and economic participation, accountability and good governance. In all these areas, the OSCE acquis and the support of individual participating States should be made available to our partners, to enhance the security situation in the region.

Secondly, the necessity of security and political inputs need to be underlined. Establishing Confidence and Security Building Measures and Codes of Conduct and developing conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation methods will be necessary to support the reform process. There again the OSCE experience can be utilized. I will come back to this point later on.

Thirdly, and very briefly, I also would like to refer to the necessity of making the influential sectors of the public in the Middle East more aware of the OSCE, its norms and structures, its acquis and experience. The Aqaba Seminar, I hope, will set a good precedent, to be followed by other similar events.

Finally, while the Middle East is poised for a historical transformation, the need for cooperation and support from the West is crucial. However, this will not be a simple affair. The Muslim world suffers not only from its own shortcomings, but also from the prejudices in the West. Many in the West seem to be readily misled by those who claim to act in the name of Islamic religion and resort to violence. Violence and terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, culture or geography. We must collectively spend more effort to putting the record straight and presenting a more informed picture.

CBM's and CSBM's

Here, I would like to briefly mention the difference and relationship between Confidence Building Measures (CBM's) and Confidence and Security Building Measures. (CSBM's). CBM concept aims to create a climate of mutual understanding, cooperation and trust, thus to facilitate further interaction including military measures. CBM's also aims to overcome psychological apprehensions. CSBM's, on the other hand, are more action oriented and are based on practical/concrete measures, mostly in the politico-military field.

Let us now try to look into OSCE's experience in conflict prevention and confidence building.

The CSCE/OSCE process has created over almost thirty years a unique set of tools and measures of preventive diplomacy. They have proven their effectiveness in preventing conflicts and in defusing tensions.

The preliminary CSCE Confidence and Security Building Measures were designed and put in place mainly for military purposes in a deeply divided and confrontational Europe. These CSBM's helped to eliminate the prevailing elements of secrecy and thus helped to create a climate of confidence.

I must also stress that these CSBM's were of a living nature and they matured in line with evolving political and military circumstances. The political will of the participants was also a determining factor.

The present comprehensive set of OSCE CSBM's are the final product of several layers or generations of CSBM's. However, their two basic premise has remained unchanged. First, transparency through exchanges of information, and secondly intrusive verification that permits an assessment of the information received.

An important by-product of this process is development of a culture of transparency and a habit of dialogue. In this manner, a new state of mind has emerged that transparency can lead to trust. This process is also the birth-place of the notion of cooperative and common security.

In short, the OSCE has come a long way since 1975 in creating and also implementing CSBM's. Achievements in this respect are impressive. It should also be mentioned that establishing and successfully implementing CSBM's is a rather long term and evolutionary process.

Preconditions for a successful initiation of CSBM's can be summarized as follows:

- political will and motivation,
- recognition of borders and legitimate rights of partners,
- existence of not only political means and climate, but also incentives,
- engagement and readiness to change established patterns of behaviour.

On the other hand, the procedure in establishing CSBM's at the policy level should be from top to bottom, but the procedure in implementing them should be from the bottom upwards.

Specific Recommendations

I will not attempt to enumerate a long list of specific recommendations. I am sure participants to this seminar will share their concrete proposals with us.

The first point I wish to underline is the necessity to be realistic and somewhat modest, at least at the outset. The second general point that I believe deserves attention is the need for ownership by the regional countries. Tailor-made proposals by others might not be that conducive for concrete results.

Within these parameters, the first step to be undertaken by the regional countries might be establishment of a conflict prevention center. This center might study the CBM's and CSBM's already in force in other regions, including the impressive set of OSCE CSBM's, and try to adopt those soft CSBM's that meet regional specifications to be implemented on a voluntary basis at the outset. Modest politically significant CSBM's might lead the way to more militarily significant measures. Such a center might also undertake the simulation of further CSBM's, to see whether they would be applicable.

Another first step may be developing channels of communication, especially between the military. Reciprocal visits of military representatives can lead to structural contacts.

On the other hand, developing a Code of Conduct to guide better relations both between various state institutions, as well as between states might also be contemplated.

My final point in addressing a realistic and modest beginning will be transparency and an integrated step-by-step approach. The important thing is to begin a journey, a journey for peace and stability and prosperity. Turkey, both bilaterally and also through the OSCE will be ready to facilitate this journey.